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Canton-Kowloon Railway

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West Point

Mt. Davis

Victoria Peak

High West

Victoria Peak Tramway

Race Course

Mt. Kellett

HONG KONG

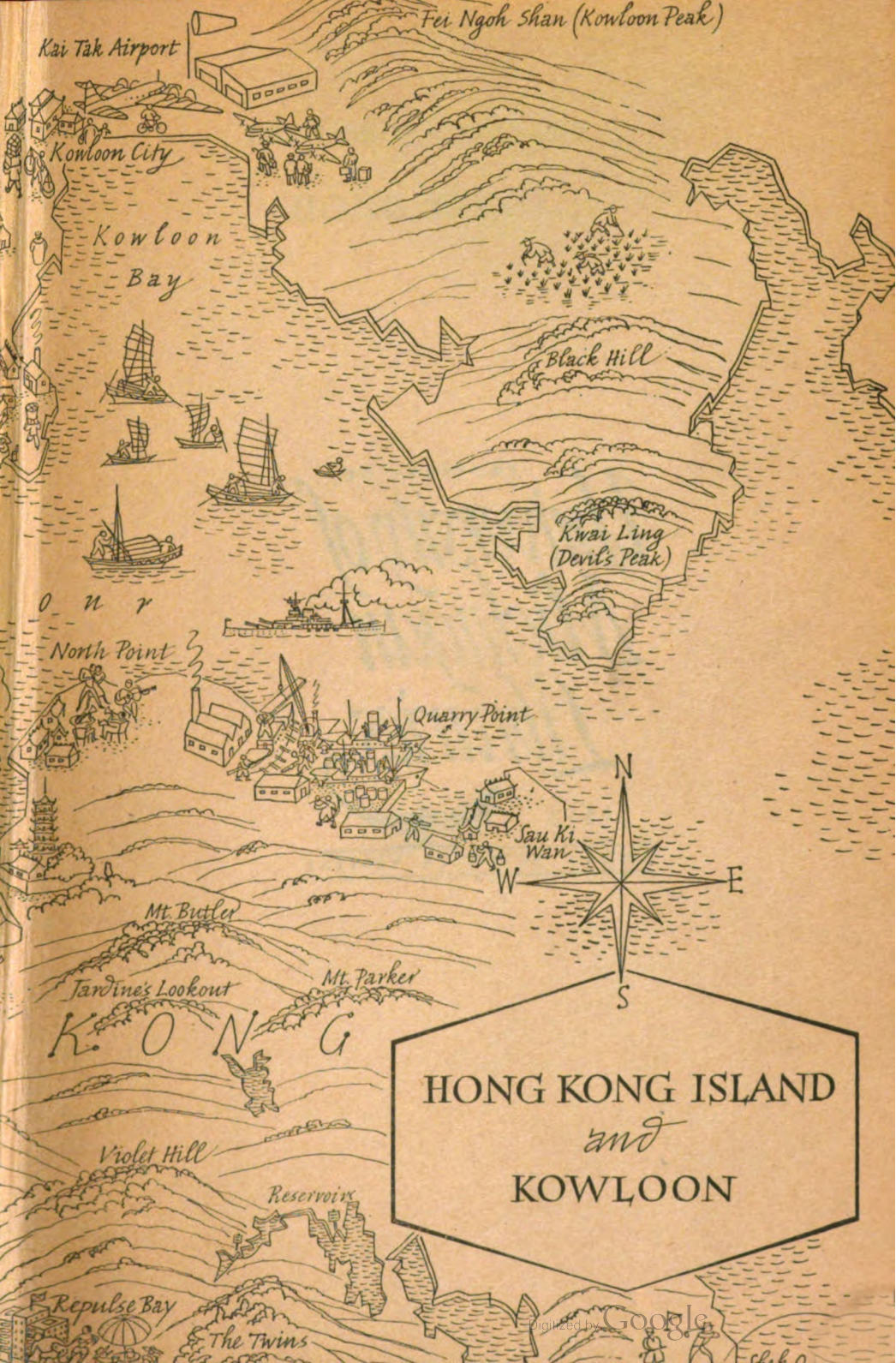
Mt. Cameron

Nickel

Aberdeen

Reservoirs

Black Hill



Kai Tak Airport

Fei Ngoh Shan (Kowloon Peak)

Kowloon City

Kowloon Bay

Black Hill

Kwai Ling
(Devil's Peak)

North Point

Quarry Point

Sau Ki Wan

Mt. Butler

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Jardine's Lookout

Violet Hill

Reservoir

Repulse Bay

The Twins

HONG KONG ISLAND and KOWLOON



THE CORONA LIBRARY [v. 1]

HONG KONG



HONG KONG

BY
HAROLD INGRAMS

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
1952

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A series of illustrated volumes under the sponsorship of the Colonial Office dealing with the United Kingdom's dependent territories, the way their peoples live, and how they are governed. The series has been designed to fill the place between official Blue books on the one hand and the writings of occasional visitors on the other, to be authoritative and readable, and to give a vivid yet accurate picture. The books are being written by established authors whose qualifications include, where possible, experience of colonial administration and first-hand knowledge of the territory concerned. Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom does not necessarily associate itself with personal views expressed by the authors. Each volume will contain maps and be fully illustrated.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgment is made to the following for the use of photographs: *Shell Photographic Unit*: Plates iv, vi, viii, ix, xiv, xv, xvi(a), xvii, xviii, xix(a), xxi, xxv(a), xxvi(b), xxviii, xxix, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxv, xxxviii(b), xxxix(b). *Mr. D. G. Cairns*: Plate xxiv. *Francis Wu, Photographer*: Plate xxvii. *Tung Hwa Motion Pictures Company, Kowloon*: Plate xxxix(a). *The National Geographic Magazine*: Plate xl.

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FOREWORD

BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

OLIVER LYTTELTON, M.P.

Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies

THIS IS THE FIRST of a new series of books about the British Colonial territories. It is a new idea in Government publications. We in the Colonial Office are proud of it and look forward keenly to carrying on the venture until we have covered all the countries with whose affairs we are concerned.

Many books are written about many of the territories, and we do not seek to discourage or to supplant private enterprise. But there is a need for a comprehensive range which will deal with all the territories according to a consistent plan, so that the reader will have a picture of all aspects of the country—its geography, history, economic conditions, social and political institutions, and the life of the people. Such a series is needed too for many official purposes: for reference libraries, for the instruction of young men and women training for the Colonial Service, and so on. But we have seen no reason why a book which includes the facts required for such purposes need be dull or unattractive. It is much more likely to be useful (and used) if it is well written, if it carries the stamp of the author's personality, and if it is well produced. We believe, too, that the public at home and overseas will be glad to have a book which is at once authoritative and picturesque.

In choosing Hong Kong as the subject of the first book we have taken a Colony which is of particular public interest at this time. A stirring story of achievement is unfolded. Anyone who visits Hong Kong, as I did recently, is struck both by what has been done there in a century of Colonial history and by the vigour and imagination and faith with which the social and political problems of today are being grasped and solved.

We have been fortunate, too, in our author. Mr. Ingrams, with a fresh and observant mind, has painted a picture of Hong Kong in words so vivid that to read his book is the next best

thing to visiting the Colony for ourselves. He has set a very high standard for the rest of this series.

I cannot conclude without a word of appreciation of the services of the editorial committee who have planned this venture and now see the first-fruits of their efforts; of the work and advice of Professor Debenham as general editor and of Mr. W. Foges as honorary consultant; and of the helpful and skilful co-operation of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and the Central Office of Information, who have spared no pains to make this a worthy production.

I hope that this book, and the series which it inaugurates, will have a well-deserved success.

OLIVER LYTTTELTON

September 1952.

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IN EXPLANATION

'PASSENGERS FOR THE BOAC flight to Rome, Cairo, Basra, Karachi, Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Tokyo, please say good-bye to your friends and take your seats in the coach.' Could such an announcement ever sound ordinary? Much as I love the Arabian Nights, no magic carpet offered such a prospect.

It was 3rd March 1950. My wife and I and twenty others started off for Heath Row, a little band already apart from the world of London streets. My thoughts were on the job ahead, an official mission of an unusual kind.

'I am directed by Mr. Secretary Creech Jones to invite you to write a book of about 100,000 words dealing authoritatively and comprehensively with the geography, history, economics, politics, social conditions and administration of the colony of Hong Kong. It is intended to be the first in a series dealing similarly with other British colonial territories and designed to provide books which, while in sufficient detail and with sufficient authority to be of value to the specialist in colonial affairs, will at the same time appeal to the general educated public by reason of their attractiveness of style and presentation.'

So began my official 'offer'. It is alarming to be asked to make an appeal to the 'general educated public', and to deal 'authoritatively' as well as 'comprehensively' with such an array of subjects as would require a team of professors and much more than 'about 100,000 words'. Being neither a professor nor a far-eastern expert, I have only tried to convey to 'ordinary readers' some of the excitement and interest Hong Kong gave to me. I hope they will not feel affronted by this assumption of a mutual sharing of lower standards.

My knowledge of the Chinese was slight. Years ago in the Island of Pemba in the Zanzibar Sultanate I made friends with three Chinese, who in a lonely little camp were collecting *bêche-de-mer* or sea-slugs for export to China. A little English and Swahili were our only means of intercourse, but they appreciated a friendly approach, and when I left presented me with a Chinese teapot and two handleless cups in a padded basket, and a Chinese-English phrase-book.

IN EXPLANATION

There were about ten thousand Chinese in Mauritius when I served there. Every village had its *boutique chinoise* where you could buy anything *en détail* from a needle to a single sardine or a tot of whisky. Port Louis had its Chinatown with Chinese restaurants, temples and a theatre. On occasion every Chinese shop or hut would fly a Nationalist flag, and one would notice pigtailed women in black pyjamas in the streets, but unless one made an effort the fact that they lived in a little world apart was easily obscured. They made their money off the rest of us, but they had their own shops, selling sea delicacies or preserved eggs (alleged to be a hundred years old), they forgathered in their own temples and used their own medicine, their own Chamber of Commerce, and the rest. Making some friends among them I saw these things, and I think that if I had not already been wedded to the Arabs I might have sought a life in China. I met Chinese in Malaya and Java in 1939, but there Arabs, Malays and Islam were still a major preoccupation. Since 1944, however, when my Arabian career suffered interruption, I have beguiled spare hours in the West African bush and elsewhere with Chinese philosophy, art and poetry, not seriously but with a consciousness of something beautiful and distant like a glimpse of a country one may climb a hill to see without having the time to descend and wander among its fields and streams.

If one believes in the Moving Finger these leanings were perhaps not without purpose, and when the chance of going to Hong Kong came, I naturally leaped at it.

In 1950 one flew to Hong Kong in three days: we spent two nights in the air and felt exhausted. We stopped at Rome in the middle of the night after a dinner over stilly, snow-covered Alpine peaks glowing in moonlight, and could have bought souvenirs of Holy Year at fantastic prices, but the only alternative was another meal. Morning brought us to Cairo and breakfast, with memories of the wine dark sea in the dawn and the rise of a ruby sun. After nostalgic reminiscence of other forms of desert crossing we landed at Basra for tea and at once made friends by talking Arabic. Quite a number of people bade us God-speed as we set off to Karachi, where we put in a couple of hours and another meal in the middle of the night before leaving for Calcutta. Dum Dum airport was alive with comings

and goings, and overheard conversations between Indian passengers established the value of the Indian version of English as one of the languages of India. For all the bustle, it was a pleasant, friendly crowd which thronged about us.

At Rangoon we spent the night. We climbed barefooted the hundreds of steps of the Golden Pagoda, where Rangoon was at its best. Repose and contemplation, there so seemly, were less appropriate in other surroundings in which the need for action was so evident. An hour out of Bangkok next day an engine broke down, so we returned for two days and recovered from sleeplessness, the telescoping of hours and too many meals. Bangkok was a lively contrast to Rangoon, and a delightful Siamese air hostess took us round its lovely temples and showed us the life of the city by day and by night. This was the last stop of a colourful journey and it was impressive to see that Britain had so imposed her pre-war culture on the world that Rome, Cairo, Karachi, Calcutta, Rangoon and Bangkok no sooner saw an Englishman than they presented him with *two* eggs and bacon at an hour.

The rapid unrolling of successive countries beneath us meant that every few hours we dropped down to another culture. There might have been less conflict of ideas in the world if air travel had been discovered earlier, but it could hardly have been so interesting. Our fellow travellers included a God-fearing, family-devoted couple who had never been out of England before. He was a firm-jawed, seagreen-incorruptible builder who was going to superintend the building of the Communist Government's new seventeen-storey bank in Hong Kong. There could be no doubt that the job would be well done. As we sat at tea at Basra his wife looked with friendly interest at the brown Arab faces, regarding them not as curiosities but as fellow human beings as much concerned with housekeeping as she was, and said of this new air travel 'How good it is that it means the meeting of the peoples!' Later in Hong Kong we found that her husband, flummoxed by his first acquaintance with chopsticks, had sent his boy out to buy a pair and was eating his English dinner with them every night so that on Chinese occasions he might not seem an awkward bungler. Big Business might contemplate whether it is really necessary to travel quite so fast, and whether business and the world would not do better if journeys allowed more contacts.

IN EXPLANATION

I have described our journey for the sake of those who can only accompany me in their armchairs, in the hope that their approach to the Far East may thereby seem not much more sudden than ours. We left Bangkok by a C.P.A. Skymaster at 4 a.m. on 8th March with an Australian pilot and several quite captivating Chinese air hostesses in becoming Air Force-blue uniforms. We should have reached Hong Kong at eight, but our pilot explained that it was fog-bound and we might have to go to Hai Fong in Indo-China. Visibility was nil but about ten o'clock my ears told me we were going down.

Down, down, down we went, like Alice tumbling down the rabbit-hole, but with only fog around us. There was a tense air in the cabin and it was not relieved when we suddenly saw just beneath us neither Hai Fong nor Hong Kong, but only a green and choppy sea and nothing else in any direction. I began to wonder how long a Skymaster kept afloat in a choppy sea, but then we whizzed over a small island with a lighthouse, and a mountain loomed out of the mist, all too close to our port-side wing. We turned a corner, had an impression of tall buildings with mist drifting past them, shot over a great array of shipping and then glided down on to the runway at Kai Tak. As we touched down there was a spontaneous outburst of clapping for our Australian pilot.

We were met by Mrs. Elaine Davis, the Assistant Information Officer, and through the crowded, colourful days of the next two months she gave us constant assistance.

Our days were full, from 9 in the morning till 10, 11, 12 or later at night. All was grist that came to our mill and this was a fairly typical day: We started off at nine with a talk with the Director of Marine about the harbour and the varied ships which throng it. We went on to the Gold and Silver Exchange and watched the buying and selling of gold amid a din and scrimmage which were worthy of a full-scale revolution. From there to the Nam Pak Hong to see how Chinese merchants buy and sell cargoes on just word of mouth and no intervention of banks. Next followed a visit to a leather merchant. We had already seen his tannery on one of Hong Kong's many islands and here saw buyers fix the price of his goods at a species of auction. Thence to the proprietor of a pawnshop, who also

owns a luxury steamship and luxury restaurant. After that, in contrast, we had lunch with the Anglican Bishop and discussed social conditions.

The afternoon began with a visit to the Rediffusion Station, watching a Chinese orchestra playing curious instruments behind plate-glass windows. Then came one to a joss-stick factory, where we made joss-sticks ourselves, and, laden with packets of them, went back to see how the pawnshop worked. After a tea-party to meet a famous Chinese calligraphist who presented us with specimens of beautiful handwriting, we crossed by the ferry to Kowloon to spend the evening with an esoteric vegetarian sect of Buddhists. They gave us a first-class meatless dinner after a séance of spirit-writing on sand at which the founder of the institution, who died many, many years ago, sent us messages.

Before we went out Mr. McDougall, formerly Chief Secretary Hong Kong, gave me much invaluable advice and letters of introduction to some of the innumerable friends he has left in all communities in Hong Kong. Government officials in the Colony spent hours explaining things and providing us with publications. When we left we had two large mail-bags full of books and reports.

His Excellency the Governor, Sir Alexander Grantham, showed a continual kindly interest and encouragement over the project, which in itself was largely due to his support. Two others who must first be mentioned were Mr. Chung King Pui, the busy Assistant to the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, who gave us much of his spare time, and the kindly, quiet and helpful Mr. Chan Yik Hi, also of the Chinese Secretariat, appointed by Government to act as our interpreter and assistant. Their names often appear in the following pages.

One excellent piece of advice Mr. Chung King Pui gave me on our first evening out was that I should say in my Preface that I had 'attempted to give a good account of the Colony without any thought of offending any section of the people'. This I have very sincerely tried to do. I started like a scarcely used sheet of blotting-paper and I absorbed impressions which I hope I have faithfully and impartially recorded. Obviously I shall have made mistakes, but to reduce the chance of giving offence I have changed a number of names. I trust those who

IN EXPLANATION

recognize themselves in these disguises will not be offended by this well-meant precaution.

Whether they are disguised or not it will be evident how much I owe to their help. Our list of helpers includes 129 names in Hong Kong alone, and I wish I could pay individual acknowledgment to them all. Those who are not specially mentioned must accept this general but heartfelt acknowledgment of their generous help. If I may single out a few who by force of circumstances gave us more time and help than others, here they are in the order (roughly) in which we met them: Mrs. Allinson, Lily Lam and Norah Kwok of the Labour Department, Mr. Gordon Harmon, Mr. Cassidy (who kindly proposed me as a member of Hong Kong's famous 'Tripehounds'), Mr. McDouall, Miss Dorothy Lee of the Social Welfare Department, Dr. Shaw, Dr. Graham Cumming, Dr. Newton, Miss Burne of the Infant Welfare Clinics, Dr. S. N. Chau, Mr. U Tat Chee, Mr. Horace Kadoorie, Mr. W. K. Wu (Wilkie Wu) of the Fisheries Department, Mr. Hart and Mr. Large of the Wholesale Vegetable Market, Bishop Hall, Father Ryan, Father Morahan, Mr. Landale (who generously lent me copies of some of Jardine's old records), Messrs. Lee Shiu Ying and Wright of the Agriculture Department, Dr. Lo, the 'Chinese' doctor, Mr. Rowell, Dr. Irene Cheng of the Education Department, Messrs. Keen, Teesdale and Paul Tsui of the District Administration, the late Mr. Tang Pak Kau, Sir Shouson Chow, Mrs. Chow and Mrs. Violet Chan of the 'old-fashioned ladies', Mr. T. O. Tso, Mr. Abbas El Arculli, Mr. McIntosh, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Binstead of the Police, Mr. Pudney, Mr. Clarke, Mr. Shillingford, Mr. J. Braga, and Mr. Lopes of Macao. And I should not like to forget Tsing, our driver.

Many of these, and others also, extended hospitality to us as well. We were wonderfully entertained in all sections of the community. Naturally, as the population figures would indicate, most of it was among the Chinese. We ate more Chinese meals than European and became reasonably expert in the use of chopsticks. Chinese food is the one subject on which I make no pretence of being unbiased. If I were capable of writing lyrics they would be on Chinese meals.

One of our happiest experiences was a week-end with Paul Tsui's family at Humble Worship Village. This greatly helped

HELPERS

us to understand Chinese village life and Paul's subsequent assistance has been most valuable.

It was hard to leave so many friends. On one of our last evenings we came back to find Dorothy Lee and Wilkie Wu doing our packing for us. They intended to see us off with a bombardment of Chinese crackers, but mercifully these were forgotten in the rush of getting away and saying good-byes to all the kind people who came to see us off.

We left Hong Kong on 8th May, and began writing the book on the voyage. It seems somehow inappropriate to acknowledge the help of my wife on this task, for she has been officially associated with me. Substantial parts have been written by her, she has researched indefatigably, typed and retyped. I am also deeply indebted to my editor Professor Frank Debenham generally for unfailing support and helpfulness, and particularly in regard to the maps. The relief map of Hong Kong is from a model specially made by him. I have equally to thank Mr. Evans and several others in the Colonial Office, and Messrs. Binfield, Grant and Thornton of the C.O.I. who have taken endless pains with their share of the work. The illustrations come from a number of sources, acknowledged elsewhere, but I should particularly like to express grateful thanks to Shell, who have very generously specially taken and presented many of them, including some of those in colour, and to Mr. D. G. Cairns who was a fellow traveller on our journey home and gave me a run of his negatives. My debt to Sir Charles Jeffries, who if I am not disclosing top secret information is the source of inspiration of this series, is personal as well as official, and extends to his family who allowed themselves to be experimented on with bits of the book as it developed. Personal also is my indebtedness to Mr. Kenneth Bradley, colleague of the Gold Coast as well as the Colonial Office, the Editor of *Corona*, who nobly read all the material written—about double the actual book—and suggested cuts and improvements. Such an astonishing number have had to do with this book that it is really a composite effort for which I can take little credit.

All this brings me back to the realization that this is in some ways an official book. It is officially sponsored and officially produced. Yet, as I hope will be evident, it is very unlike any official production. This is because I have been allowed a wide

IN EXPLANATION

and generous freedom of expression and opinion. Nobody official shares any more responsibility than a firm of commercial publishers for the book's contents. There are many to thank and only me to blame. This seems to me 'a good idea'. My underlying aims have been to tell the reader about things as I saw them, whether good or bad, and to create a sense of friendship between British readers and those very delightful people in Hong Kong who are so closely associated with us. My official career has included work in many diverse countries in Africa, Asia and Europe, and the more I see of them the more I feel what a lot many of us miss by not knowing their peoples more intimately. Incidentally they themselves miss a lot by not knowing each other (and us!) better.

I should emphasize that my picture is of Hong Kong in the early months of 1950. Except for one or two footnotes nothing refers to a later date. It is important to realize this, for change is everywhere so rapid nowadays. If I draw attention to anything after that time I should like it to be to the Annual Report on the Colony for 1950, which shows some more impressive developments in social services and kindred subjects in Hong Kong.

Though the Bibliography includes most of the books consulted, it has the wider purpose of offering a fairly comprehensive field of study, generally and specially, to those who want to know more about a remarkable colony. I am much indebted to Mr. Mitchell and his colleagues in the Colonial Office Library for their assistance in revising the Bibliography.

HAROLD INGRAMS

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Canterbury,
Kent.*

PART ONE

*PICTURE OF
HONG KONG*

CHAPTER ONE

Echoes

FROM THE MOMENT of my arrival in Hong Kong the noise and ceaseless activity of the great city, combined with the dramatic natural beauty of its setting and the picturesque quality of its long Chinese streets, induced in me that feeling of excitement which seems to take possession of every visitor. The urgent life of the present did not obscure but rather stimulated a historic sense of the past: I seemed to be witnessing an age-old way of life and a civilization long established in its setting. It was hard to reconcile its insistence with the fact that the streets through which I walked had been non-existent little more than a century ago and the busy, peopled scene merely a desolate rocky landscape.

Excitement was enhanced by the air of tenseness abroad in the city. For all its material greatness and solidity Hong Kong has often had periods of uncertainty, and there was now a general sense of impermanence, due to the situation in the Far East, which conflicted strangely with the so evident recent expansion in building, and even more strangely with the colonial atmosphere to which I was accustomed, in which men discussed the progress of the territories in which they lived towards their goal of self-government. Here they discussed only the chances of survival. Furthermore in recent weeks there had been warlike incidents in the neighbourhood, with Nationalist warships from Formosa attacking Communist China, or Nationalist planes bombing the roads and railway leading from the Colony to Canton, and indeed Canton itself.

Excitement in Hong Kong is normal. I fancy that at its quietest time the atmosphere is at least that of the Stock Exchange, for it depends entirely on trade and that is always at the mercy of external factors over which it has no control. Of all Hong Kong's exciting periods none is more fascinating than the 1830's, the period of its conception in Canton, though to understand its problems one must go back much earlier than that. The countries of the Middle East and Europe built up

Western civilization together, but it was not until late in history that the West began to have appreciable relations with China. This meant that two sets of human beings sharing all the common needs of humanity had each to solve its common problems apart, from the most ordinary everyday things to the most complicated, from material things to spiritual things.

'The Land of This', said a first-century writer, 'is not easy of access; few men came from there and seldom.' But he told us that the inhabitants were 'by nature peaceable', and peaceable the earliest visitors from the West, Ibn Batuta and Marco Polo, found them. They were peaceable, too, when the first Portuguese traders arrived in 1513, but five years later the greed of the traders brought out some of the worst in man and from that time on the people of the West were regarded as dangerous.

Yet China, subject to safeguards, was ready to be benevolent. Believing that tea and silk and rhubarb were essential to the barbarians, they allowed them to trade at Canton subject to certain regulations designed to prevent their ever being dangerous. The traders stayed in the factory area outside the city during the winter, living in quarantine conditions. The most profitable side of their business was opium smuggling, for the import was prohibited by the Chinese Government. In the factory area the merchant princes, or Taipans as they were called, lived in splendour, albeit in a gilded captivity. William Hunter, an American merchant, has described the splendidly furnished dining-room of the East India Company's factory, the sparkling silver and glass, the heavy glossy napery, and the rich dishes and copious wines.

The sole intermediaries between foreigners and mandarins were the members of the Co-Hong, selected Chinese merchants who paid a heavy price for their monopoly. Relations between the Co-Hong and the foreign merchants were intimate, but with the mandarins they were difficult and strained. Hunter stands up for the mandarins and admits the 'many provocations inflicted by foreigners' on them. 'We treated their *chops*, their prohibitions, warnings and threats, as a rule, very cavalierly.' 'We often spoke of their forbearance', he goes on, 'and wondered at the aid and protection they extended to us; in fact, they considered us more as unruly children, people who had never had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with *Taou-le* or *reason*.'

Hunter emphasizes that if a brawl occurred between the Chinese and the foreigners, the mandarins were always against their own people, beating them unceremoniously and shepherding the foreigners to their factories with much solicitude.

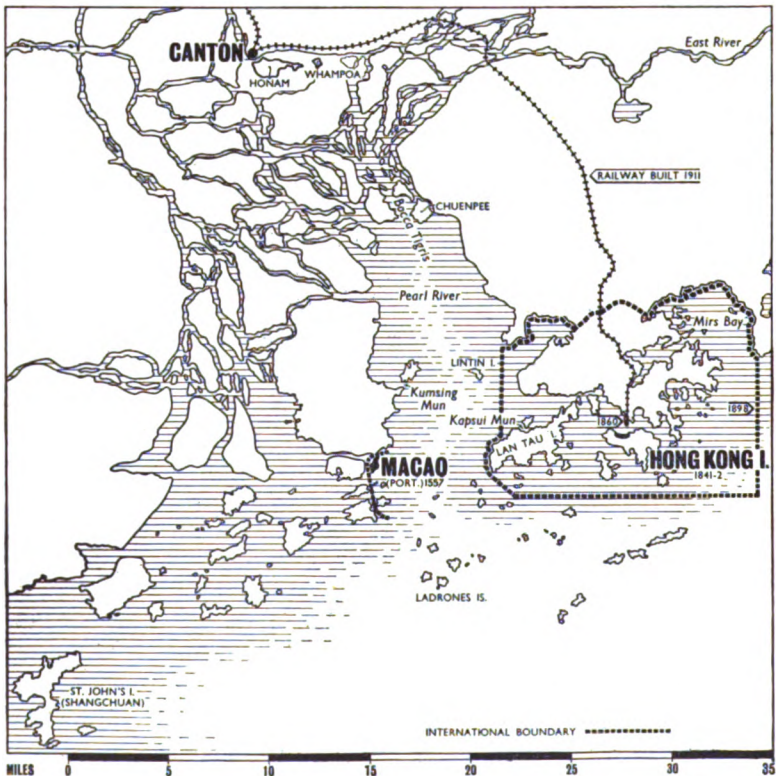
Despite the restrictive nature of the regulations, the East India Company, who had the monopoly of British trade in the Far East, developed and greatly increased it. The Chinese had judged rightly in foreseeing dangerous consequences to their way of life from the impact of the West, but they had seriously miscalculated in thinking they could be avoided by permitting merchants to trade under restrictions, however strictly enforced. As Sir Robert Chalmers said in his *History of Currency in the British Colonies*: 'The ukases of government are futile, when opposed to trade relations and the natural trend of commerce. In the quaint words of Sir Thomas Violet in 1643, "Time, the truest Schoolmaster, hath taught all ages to know that little penalties could yet never interpose between the merchant and his profit".'

Unfortunately it was not possible for us to visit Canton, but it is neither there nor in Hong Kong, which have both changed so greatly, that one can recapture something of the atmosphere of the exciting scenes of those days. To do that we went to Macao, whither in the summer the China merchants went to bask in all the graciousness and festivity of a European colony in the East.

The little Portuguese colony is today a place of quiet charm, contrasting greatly with the endless bustle of Hong Kong. It has an air of the past, but it is no mouldering ruin. Modern Macao with its delightful villas in pastel colours and its shady tree-lined roads breathes an air of peaceful Mediterranean repose, in keeping with the oldest European colony in the Far East. Even the busy harbour is peaceful, and in the junk yards the ancient craft, bristling with a forest of masts, take on from their environment a look of being more than their age.

Much of old Macao, where in the seventeenth century the Portuguese lived, is now occupied by the Chinese, though it still has a southern European look about it. It was early evening when we passed through the quarter, and in the twilight one fancied ghosts of a bygone age flitting through its silent streets. A Virgin-surmounted church on top of a hill watches over the

scene. From this height you can see all over the tiny colony and look beyond its barrier gate to China. Dominating old Macao stood the seventeenth-century church of St. Paul which was destroyed by fire in 1835. All that remains of it is the great flight of steps surmounted by a noble façade with statues of Ignatius and Francis Xavier. Cobbled, grass-grown streets lead down to nearby scenes once familiar to those who lived in the stormy times in which the colony of Hong Kong came to birth. These scenes breathe indeed the atmosphere of an earlier age, for here, as some still have it, the poet Camoens used to wander. Next door to Camoens's grotto there stands in a formal



HONG KONG AND THE CANTON DELTA

The scene of the events of the 1830's which led to the birth of the Colony of Hong Kong

garden the old house of the East India Company just as it stood more than a hundred years ago.

'This interesting cave (Camoens's grotto)', wrote Sir George Staunton in 1797, 'is now in the middle of a garden belonging to a house where the Ambassador (Lord Macartney) and two of his suite resided at Macao, upon the invitation from one of the gentlemen of the factory, who dwelt in it when not called upon to be in Canton. This house and garden command a very extensive prospect.'

In 1829 a young American girl, Harriet Low, was transplanted from 'the dull and extremely provincial town of Salem, Mass., to live in China, under the auspices of the East India Company, and in all the luxury and formality of the English society of that time. It must have been a bewildering change at first from the quiet and rather puritanical regime of home, where Sunday was kept with the utmost strictness, and Saturday night was almost as rigidly observed, to the ceaseless round of dinners, balls, and Sunday visiting in Macao, from being one of the many superfluous females of Massachusetts to occupying the dazzling and somewhat hazardous position of the only "spinster" where men were so numerous and for much of the time so unoccupied'. So writes the editor of Harriet's diary.

Harriet herself was captivated on arrival:

Macao from the sea looks beautiful, with some most romantic spots. We arrived there about ten o'clock, took sedan chairs and went to our house, which we liked the looks of very much. The streets of Macao are narrow and irregular, but we have a garden in which I anticipate much pleasure.

By Christmas she was beginning to feel somewhat sophisticated:

Dec. 25, 1829

This evening we are to dine with the Company at half-past six, where we shall be as stiff as stakes and, I suppose, shall not enjoy ourselves at all. These dinners are amazing stiff, but I shall rig myself in white satin under-dress, with a wrought muslin petticoat, and a pink satin bodice to set neatly to my neat little form, and made by my own neat little hands. I shall then jump into my neat little chair, and proceed to the scene of action. I shall say all the neat little things I can and discuss the merits of the several dishes on my way.

But when she got there she found, as we often do at official dinners, that it wasn't so bad after all:

Everything on the table was splendid—a whole service of massive plate. There were about sixty at table. The dinner consisted of every delicacy, served in the most elegant style, and with the greatest order. Everyone brings their own servant to wait upon them at table. When the first course is cleared away, these extra servants all fall back to the wall, and the regular servants carry out the dishes, handed to them by the butlers. . . . I ate a piece of plum-pudding that was very nice; but it wanted something—I suppose the home relish. What tasted most like home were the cucumbers, which really looked natural. It would be impossible to describe the various dishes. Suffice it to say that everything was as elegant as possible, and that there was everything that could be obtained that was nice and delicate. The time passed very pleasantly, and there was nothing stiff about it. Everybody appeared perfectly easy and at home.

Again she wrote:

Saw one of the Company's ships with the sun shining on her well-filled sails. How I wished for Mr. Chinnery's talent for painting that I might sketch for you the beautiful scene before me, the large and handsome Church, milk white, with a splendid flight of stone steps [St. Paul's no doubt, though the façade is no longer milk white]. Just beyond, the port, stretching into the bay. Beyond this again you can see the roads, and the little boats skimming over the surface.

They were still skimming in the spring of 1950.

In 1830 Harriet was one of the party of women that went from Macao to Canton, thereby breaking Number Two of the Chinese Regulations which declared that 'Neither women, guns, spears, nor arms of any kind can be brought to the factories'. They were compelled to leave after only three days in Canton under threats of a stoppage of all trade. However, their brief excursion must have caused a pleasant stir in the factories. Even ten years later the foreign fair sex was scarce in Chinese outposts. The agent of a British firm at Shanghai, describing, in a business letter to his principals, the first foreign wedding, wrote: 'I, as best man, had the run of three fresh English cheeks—a very pleasant contrast to the grazing to which I am used. The price of silk is falling.'

But by 1857 the gaiety and life of Macao was already passing.

'Macao looks well from the sea', wrote George Wingrove Cocke, *The Times* special correspondent, in that year. 'A semi-circle of large white houses glitters in the sunshine. Right and left two hills, crowned with forts and covered with foliage, protect either horn of the crescent; while from the dense city behind domes and cathedral-towers rise. But it is the appearance

of a past greatness. If we except the houses of the Praya, "Fuit" is written upon every wall. . . . Some of the Cantonese merchants have established themselves here, and every one of our commercial magnates of Hong Kong has a bungalow within the protection of the Portuguese guard.'

Adjoining the East India Company's house is a quiet walled grove, the English cemetery. Among its bamboo clumps there stands a stone doorway bearing only the name 'George Chinnery'. Behind it rest the remains of the painter of whom that American girl wrote. Coming to China about the end of the eighteenth century, Chinnery, an Irishman and a distinguished artist, has kept alive for us many of the figures who walk so urgently through the diaries and journals of the time.

It is in this corner of old Macao that the scenes of the 1830's come back with little effort. Here with the sun filtering through the leaves in this quiet cemetery the spirits of some of those figures seem still to linger on. It was like a room in which puppet figures had been laid away. The door might have opened, and Chinnery, with his ugly whiskered little face, who had in life watched them and recounted many a tale about them, stepped forth to pull the strings and make them play again.

I wandered from grave to grave reading the inscriptions. In 1836 an American naval surgeon, William Ruschenberger, wrote of this cemetery:

The British burial-ground is in the neighbourhood, and is kept in neat order by the Superintendent's chaplain, who, regarding it much in the light of a cabinet of curiosities, never willingly permits a specimen to be deposited without being properly labelled, and marked by cubes of Portland stone, or marble, for the amusement of those who delight to wander among the tombs, not always with a view, however, to brighten their morals from the rottenness of the grave. We may gather some notion how many worldly hopes and aspirations have been concluded here, from the pompous show of grief for the departed, recorded, in marble, by the living, because more tenacious than the natural memory of ordinary men.

I had cause to ponder on how far some hopes and aspirations had been concluded here and to feel assured that in one case at least they had been neither concluded nor worldly. This was a tomb on which the inscription read:

Robert Morrison, D.D. The first Protestant missionary to China, where after a service of 27 years cheerfully spent in extending the kingdom of the blessed Redeemer, during which period he compiled and published

A Dictionary of the Chinese Language, founded the Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca and for several years laboured alone on a Chinese version of the holy scripture. He was born at Morpeth, Northumberland, 5th January 1782, was sent to China by the London Missionary Society in 1807, was for 25 years Chinese translator in the employ of the East India Company and died at Canton, August 1st 1834.

There is much history between the lines of this tombstone biography, but it is only with the passage of years that its significance has become apparent.

Morrison was an Evangelical, moulded by the same influences as Wilberforce, his senior by 23 years. He had the narrowness of outlook of the Evangelicals as well as their humanitarianism. His opinion of the Chinese was low; 'ignorant, deluded, guilty men' he called them. It is doubtful whether he saw any insuperable incongruity between trading in opium and preaching Christianity. He believed no doubt that a greater good could come out of a smaller evil.

None the less the story on that tombstone is one of patient perseverance maintained by a great faith. Morrison believed that by giving the Bible to the Chinese and educating them to read it and understand the way of life of Christian people, he could put them in the only way of salvation. He went down into his grave knowing, as he had doubtless known when he started, that it would not be for him to see his Promised Land in China. His was no worldly hope or aspiration, but he lit a candle.

On 15th October, little more than two months after Morrison had been laid to rest, a long cortège of British and Portuguese notables followed another coffin to the little cemetery. Lord Napier, the first British Chief Superintendent of Trade in China, to whom Morrison had been secretary and official translator, had died on 11th October a disappointed, disillusioned man who had tried to do things in a hurry and got hurt in the process.

'Napier', says Mr. Collis in his absorbing book on this period in China (*Foreign Mud*, p. 177), 'was a man of many good qualities, but was also a strait-laced Presbyterian at a time when the Presbyterians were a narrow sect. In his heart he considered the Chinese ignorant heathens and, when he discovered that they saw him as an unlettered barbarian, was disconcerted and thrown off his balance, having no saving grace of humour

or liking for paradox as had merchants like Hunter, who found it all very funny.'

Besides the narrow outlook of religion which Napier shared with Morrison, he had also a low opinion of the Chinese, but he hoped that free and ordered trade with China would be established and followed 'by the overthrow of idolatry and the complete triumph of pure Christianity'. He, too, saw no great evil in the sale of opium to China. There, however, the resemblance between the two men ended. Although no one thought it at the time, the work of Morrison was to be far more significant in the history of China than was the presence of Lord Napier.

Amongst those who followed Napier's coffin on that October morning in 1834, walking just behind Lady Napier and her daughter and the assistant superintendents, was a man named William Jardine, merchant prince of Canton, who had built up a fortune from opium dealing. After him came the British and Portuguese naval and military officers. Then came the main body of British merchants headed by Jardine's partner, James Matheson, and another great opium runner, James Innes. During the short period of Napier's mission Jardine had rapidly become his chief counsellor, following a policy of using the clashes between Napier and the Chinese Viceroy as a means of impressing on His Majesty's Government at home the need for a firm stand and armed demonstration in advancing the cause of unrestricted British trade in China.

Jardine's contribution to empire building was of an unusual kind. Scots by race and a doctor by profession, he entered the employ of the East India Company as a ship's surgeon, but finding trade more profitable than medicine soon gave it up and, joining the famous Parsee firm of Framjee Cowasjee, went to Canton as their agent in 1822. Cowasjee's main business was in opium and in Canton Jardine had also the agency for other opium firms. So successful was he in opium smuggling that in 1824 he was taken into partnership by a naturalized British subject of Huguenot origin called Hollingworth Magniac, who was the head of the leading opium firm. Magniac, commending Jardine, wrote of him: 'You will find Jardine a most conscientious, honourable and kind-hearted fellow, extremely liberal and an excellent man of business in this market, where his knowledge and experience in the opium trade and in most

articles of export is highly valuable. He requires to be known to be properly appreciated.' Soon after Jardine joined the firm Magniac retired, and two years later Jardine was left in charge. In 1828 he took Matheson, another Scot, into partnership. While Jardine dealt with the smuggling of opium into Canton, Matheson, in the trade in Canton since 1819, specialized in smuggling along the Chinese coast, and the pair soon developed a most efficient organization, concentrating on fast clippers which far outstripped the old country craft.

In old records of 'The Princely House', as their firm came to be known, I read that 'At first the chief article of import had been cotton, but by the eighteen-twenties this gave place to opium'. They had, however, an extensive trade in a wide range of other commodities. 'Tin', the records relate, 'is an article in steady demand being much used to gild pieces of paper burnt by the Chinese in religious ceremonies of constant recurrence.' And 'of Birds' Nests there is a constant consumption increasing with the increase of Luxury, what is called the first sort fine white and not much broken will sell here at the commencement of the season for \$40 per Catty. Bêche-de-Mer is a precarious article to deal in for one not acquainted with the quality of which it requires considerable experience to be a good judge; small black and heavy pieces are considered the best and will sell at from 20 to 40 Taels a picul. Sandalwood is in extensive use in offering incense to the gods. The Americans bring large quantities from the Fiji and Sandwich Islands, but you may be always sure of 9 or 10 dollars per picul in this market'.

Jardine's silk room is one of the oldest offices in the organization. In 1836 Canton exported 21,000 bales of raw silk: the price of the best sorts was about 550 dollars a picul. Elegant crêpe shawls and scarves, gauzes and checked lustrines, satins and lining silks, pongees, handkerchiefs, sarsnet, senshaws and levantines, were among the manufactured goods which came from Canton to delight feminine eyes in the West.

Tea was the most valuable export, and fast clippers were essential to carry the cargo to Britain, Europe and America. The ships raced home, each trying to be first in order to obtain the best prices. When the East India Company's factory in Canton closed down there were over four million dollars' worth of imports and over seven million dollars' worth of export teas



PRAYA GRANDE, MACAO, 1847. Coloured lithograph by G. R. West. *Chater Collection*

'A semicircle of large white houses glitters in the sunshine' (p. 16)



THE 'NEMESIS' AT CHUENPEE, 1841. Aquatint by E. Duncan. *Chater Collection*
'The rocket from the *Nemesis* entered the large junk and it blew up with a terrific explosion' (p. 26)

taken over by the old country traders and by a flock of new firms which sprang up to meet the demand. So many new traders came in that by 1837 the British community had grown from 66 to 156.

In the capable hands of Jardine and Matheson the trade prospered more and more. They created a tradition in ships and men which has lasted till today, long after the trade on which the firm's prosperity was founded had come to an end. The coast trade, started as a side-line, grew to be more important simply because by its nature it avoided contact with important Chinese Government posts. That government had no centrally directed revenue service, and even if officials had been honest, the creeks of the Chinese coast rendered smuggling easy.

The fact that English ships could cock snooks at them simply added to the Chinese fear of foreigners, and by now the English had long overthrown Emperors and Princes in India. Through their extensive trade Jardine and Matheson knew better than others how weak China was, and it put them in the position not only of leaders of British trade interests but gave them the influence to bear on His Majesty's Government and to state authoritatively how China could be brought down. As Justin McCarthy has put it: 'To adopt the happy illustration of a clever writer, England has dealt with China for the time as a backwoodsman sometimes does with a tree in the American forests—"girdled" it with the axe, so as to mark it for felling at a more convenient opportunity.'

When the East India Company's monopoly ended in 1834 the pressure of the Canton merchants on the home government became direct, for Napier represented His Majesty's Government. The Chinese had always dealt with the merchants through the Co-Hong and in this way international questions had never arisen. In any case, believing that Peking was the navel of the world and that all men beyond the borders of China were 'outer barbarians' whose only status could be that of tributaries, there was no way in their logic for the 'barbarian eye' of the foreign merchants to be anything more than a headman. There were no equals to the Son of Heaven to send envoys in our meaning.

Like the Chinese who saw China as the Middle Kingdom and the Son of Heaven as Heaven's vice-regent, like the Popes who saw themselves in the same capacity and divided the world

between Spain and Portugal, like the Muslims who saw Mecca as the world's navel, the British saw London as the world's capital. Omphaloscepsis has always been one of the world's troubles. It had led to the loss of the American colonies, for it took that to divert King, Westminster and Whitehall from the centripetal view of Empire. It was the omphaloscepsis of the outposts who eventually converted us to the centrifugal idea of commonwealth. The East India Company had found no difficulty in maintaining the centripetal view, for they conducted their affairs, whether in India or in China, from London. They were primarily concerned that their servants in the outposts made profits for them, and satisfactory profits could be made at Canton despite the restrictions imposed by the Chinese. The Company was not seriously perturbed by any inconveniences which those restrictions caused to their servants personally. Now the position had changed.

Napier, egged on by Jardine and other merchants, refused to obey the regulation that all communications addressed to the Viceroy of Canton must be headed *Pin* 'a humble petition' and transmitted through the Hong. The Viceroy would have nothing to do with Napier until he obeyed the laws of the heavenly realm, and Napier paid no attention to the Viceroy's edicts and threats. Finally Napier issued a proclamation in Chinese calling the Viceroy ignorant and obstinate and accusing him of interfering with trade. The Viceroy countered with another calling Napier a mad dog. He also stopped the trade, withdrew the Chinese servants from the factories and put a guard on Napier's quarters. Napier summoned two British warships and secured a guard of marines. But it was the end. He left for Macao, where he died only three months after his arrival on the scene in Canton.

After his death the trade was immediately opened, but the merchants, led by Jardine, addressed a petition to William IV demanding a Plenipotentiary and a show of force. Nothing was done then, but meanwhile Peking had become determined to put down the opium trade, which flourished because, in view of the high profits involved, the merchants found it easy to bribe the Chinese officials. The merchants in Canton were ordered by the Viceroy to deliver up all their opium within three days, and were required to sign bonds undertaking under pain of

death never to import more. The Chinese servants were again withdrawn, supplies cut off from the factories, and guards mounted. Elliot, who had been appointed Superintendent of Trade after Napier, delivered up 20,283 chests of opium but refused the signing of the bonds. After the opium had been surrendered he and 16 British merchants, including Matheson (Jardine had by now left for home), were allowed to leave for Macao.

The London to which Jardine came back in 1839 was different to the one he had left twenty years earlier. His ambitions no doubt had been to make a fortune and join the gentry, one of the 'nabobs, negro-drivers, generals, admirals, governors, commissaries, contractors, pensioners, sinecurists, commissioners, loan-jobbers, lottery-dealers, bankers, stock-jobbers' to whom Cobbett was to refer. His philosophy was that of Adam Smith and Bentham, the division of labour, free trade and *laissez-faire*. And no interference by the State with the making of money and the way people spent it and lived.

The currents which shape the course of human affairs had begun to turn the minds of men to greater humanity at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and they flowed more strongly during Jardine's absence. Chief among many recent humanitarian reforms was the abolition of slavery. 'The hold of Wilberforce and the anti-slavery movement', says Trevelyan, 'on the solid middle class in town and country was a thing entirely beautiful—English of the best, and something new in the world.'

True it had not affected the merchants of Canton: but it had cost the country £20,000,000 and Jardine may have reflected that if England were prepared to put her hand in her pocket to gratify a decent impulse, she might be prepared to face the loss the stopping of the opium trade would mean. England had already decided that opium was bad for her subjects in India, though as yet she considered it legitimate to grow it in India to sell to the 'heathen Chinee' to pay for India's education and hospitals. It meant five and a half millions a year to Indian revenues.

Not only had slavery been abolished. The Poor Law had been improved and State education provided for. These were not *laissez-faire*. The Evangelical religion had become stronger. On

the other hand, squires were still squires and enclosures were being made all the time, to the profit of the rich and the improvement of national production, but often to the removal of the means of livelihood of the poor. And England still stood up for trade. It would clearly be wise not to say too much about opium. But after all, that very year, Aden had been captured as a coaling point on the way to India. Palmerston had backed Lord Auckland in India with his expedition to Afghanistan to forestall a Russo-Persian protectorate there. Yes, Palmerston was the man.

There was a feeling in Radical circles against colonial expansion, but no one attacked the East India Company where the disciples of Bentham were all-powerful. James Mill, who had recently died, had entered its service when Jardine went to China, and his son John Stuart, who had still 20 years to go before he proclaimed that man must exercise his natural capacities and talents without being impeded by evil economic conditions, was still working with the Company.

Jardine, however, would not have worried if he had ever been down a coal mine. Humanitarians of all sects could unite on freeing slaves in the West Indies and Mauritius, but being, some of them, hard-headed business men, they could not do so to free the 'little factory slaves', or the boys and girls of seven and eight who worked in coal mines for anything up to 16 hours a day, and lived in narrow streets of houses built back to back and side to side with indescribable sanitary conditions. All this was unfortunate but unavoidable, for the Benthamite creed of enlightened self-interest leading to 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' meant that employer and employed must be left free to make what bargains they chose, whatever suffering or inhumanity might result.

But Jardine had not been down a coal mine and these conditions were still just vague knowledge in the background. There were humanitarians, but provided not too much splash was made about opium who was going to worry that Chinamen were being demoralized? Besides to a business man there was a difference between slave-dealing and opium-dealing. Adam Smith had pointed out that on many counts slave labour was less economic than free and this point of view had weighed with the abolitionists. Otherwise many more would have held it

regrettable but inevitable. Indeed, one of Wilberforce's early spiritual advisers was a clergyman who had been master of a slave ship when 'conversion' came upon him, and the change in his outlook had brought with it no sense of its incompatibility with his occupation. In fact opium and slaves were not on the same footing. You could eat opium without many ill effects, you could smoke good opium with but few, it had much medicinal virtue. But these arguments did not dispose of the fact that the enormous export of Indian opium to China had little but a devastating effect on the Chinese, most of whom were poor and smoked bad opium.

Viceroy Lin, far away in Canton, was puzzled by the iniquity of these foreigners who brought this deadly poison. Surely their Queen could know nothing about it. He wrote to her in this very year:

We have reflected that this noxious article is the clandestine manufacture of artful schemers under the dominion of your honourable nation. Doubtless you, the honourable chieftainess, have not commanded the growing and sale thereof. We have heard that in your honourable barbarian country the people are not permitted to inhale the drug. If it is admittedly so deleterious, how can to seek profit by exposing others to its malific powers be reconciled with the decrees of Heaven? You should immediately have the plant plucked up by the very root. Cause the land there to be hoed up afresh, sow the five grains and if any man dare again to plant a single poppy, visit his crime with condign punishment. Then not only will the people of the Celestial Kingdom be delivered from an intolerable evil, but your own barbarian subjects albeit forbidden to indulge will be safeguarded against falling a prey to temptation. There will result for each the enjoyment of felicity.

Queen Victoria probably never received this letter, but Palmerston's mail-bag was heavy with petitions from British merchants from Manchester, London, Leeds, Liverpool, Bristol and Blackburn. Manchester firms had cotton goods to the value of half a million sterling at Canton. Their agents had been deprived of liberty and placed in peril. The firms had suffered damage and apprehended ruin. All this was to give Jardine solid backing.

Securing an interview with Palmerston, Jardine advised him what steps to take. The outcome of it was that Palmerston decided to make Viceroy Lin's treatment of the foreigners the *casus belli* and Britain's first war with China, generally called the Opium War, followed.

The fact was that the curious system of Factories and Co-Hong and official relations which the Chinese had set up to protect themselves against too great foreign intrusion had failed. It had failed largely because the British merchants insisted on smuggling opium, but Britain did not fight the war to perpetuate the opium trade. She fought it to give British merchants a way to trade in their own methods. Nobody thought it immoral to force the Chinese to open trade.

Furthermore it must be emphasized that not only had Chinese officials at Canton showed themselves easily bribable in permitting the smuggling of opium, but the whole system of Government control had been extremely lax. The edicts of Peking were in fact for long almost a dead letter in Canton in this respect, and the merchants had therefore grounds for assuming that they were not to be taken seriously.

In June 1840 a large naval and military expeditionary force began to assemble at Hong Kong. Perhaps the most dramatic incident in the campaign was at Chuenpee in the Bocca Tigris in the Canton River on 7th January of the following year.

One of the most formidable engines of destruction which any vessel, particularly a steamer, can make use of is the Congreve rocket, a most terrible weapon when judiciously applied, especially where there are combustible materials to act upon. The very first rocket fired from the *Nemesis* was seen to enter the large junk against which it was directed, near that of the admiral, and almost instantly it blew up with a terrific explosion, launching into eternity every soul on board, and pouring forth its blaze like the mighty rush of fire from a volcano. The instantaneous destruction of the huge body seemed appalling to both sides engaged. The smoke, and flame, and thunder of the explosion, with the fragments falling around, and even portions of dissevered bodies scattering as they fell, were enough to strike with awe, if not with fear, the stoutest heart that looked upon it.

Hong Kong was occupied on the 26th January 1841, but the war did not end until the 29th August of the following year with the signature of the Treaty of Nanking. The principal provisions of the treaty were that Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai should be opened for trade and the cession of Hong Kong confirmed, that six million dollars indemnity, three million debts due by Hong merchants and the costs of the war and twelve million dollars should be paid, with interest at five per cent, that prisoners of war should be released, Chinese who

THE TREATY OF NANKING

had served British amnestied, that there should be a fair and regular tariff of duties and charges, and that fixed terms of equality should be used in official correspondence. In other words, no more *Pin* pricks. Opium was not mentioned.

When it was all over, Palmerston wrote to the mutual friend who had introduced Jardine to him:

To the assistance and information which you, my dear Smith, and Mr. Jardine so handsomely afforded us, it was mainly owing that we were able to give to our affairs, naval, military and diplomatic, in China, those detailed instructions which have led to these satisfactory results.

We may contrast this with the echo of Gladstone's words: 'I am in dread of the judgment of God upon England for our national iniquity towards China.' History would show how far Britain has justified herself in Hong Kong.

CHAPTER TWO

First Footsteps

On the return of the Commodore on the 24th we were directed to proceed to Hong Kong and commence its survey. We landed on Monday the 26th January at fifteen minutes past eight, and being 'bona fide' first possessors, Her Majesty's health was drunk with three cheers on Possession Mount.

THE SPEAKER is Captain Belcher, commanding H.M. Survey Ship *Sulphur*, the year 1841, and the occasion the birth and baptism of Her Majesty's new colony of Hong Kong.

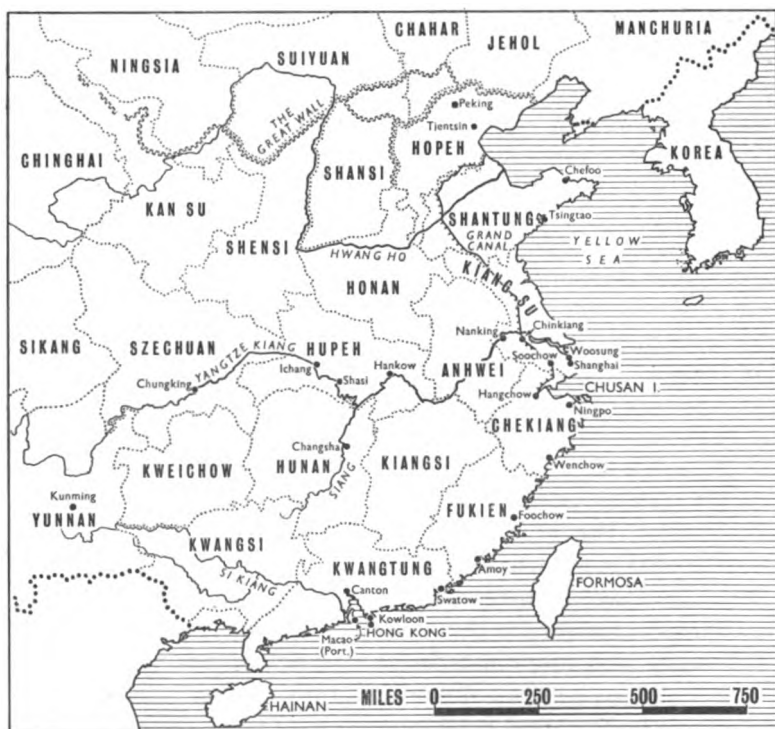
Few thought much of the new acquisition. The English in London were annoyed with friends who said 'Go to Hong Kong'. Even the Queen thought little enough of the new stone in her diadem. 'Albert is so much amused at my having got the island of Hongkong, and we think Victoria ought to be called Princess of Hongkong as well as Princess Royal.'

A fairly steady stream of ridicule was directed at it, some of it quite amusing, from the *Canton Press* at Macao:

FIRST FOOTSTEPS

We are happy to announce to our readers that the new settlement 'progresses' in a most surprising manner. The site of the principal town has been selected with the judgment which is characteristic of the English authorities in China: and we may mention in proof of this that every street will be perfectly sheltered from the south wind, which will be an immense comfort during the approaching hot season. There are abundant supplies of granite and cold water, and we need not point out the facility with which provisions can be obtained from Canton and Macao. A street on a gigantic scale is already far advanced, leading from an intended public office to a contemplated public thoroughfare; and we now only require houses, inhabitants, and commerce to make this settlement one of the most valuable of our possessions.

And so it went on: it was very unhealthy; it was a miserable desert anyway.



China, showing the Treaty Ports. 'The Treaty of Nanking provided that Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai should be opened for trade and the cession of Hong Kong confirmed' (p. 26)

True enough, disease, fire, typhoons and other disasters had provided setback after setback to the pioneers who built Hong Kong, but to me, walking along Queen's Road on an early evening in May 1950, it hardly seemed possible that the site of so great a city had been desert so short a time ago. It was my second day in Hong Kong and I was fortunate that no less important a person than Mr. Chung King Pui, the Assistant to the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, had undertaken my initiation into the ways of life which lay behind the gay setting in which I moved. I could have had no better guide. The experience and knowledge which he had gained in a long period of service seemed to add weight to his already impressive figure. His lightest utterance was framed in well-chosen words which bore evidence to the serious consideration he gave to all matters, however insignificant they might seem. He led me along streets above which, hanging like banners, were long and narrow signs painted in gay colours and bearing the names of shops in Chinese characters. They were works of art in themselves. These and the coloured and decorated pillars of the arcades gave to the scene a fanciful, musical comedy setting. I felt the curtain had gone up and anything might happen.

The portentous solemnity of Mr. Chung increased in me the feeling of expectancy. I adjusted myself respectfully to his demeanour as he led me up the steep slope of Hollywood Road and we mounted the hill with that impressive gait which befits older men engaged in weighty matters. I had no idea where we were going but perceived readily enough that the thoughts of my erudite instructor were too sublimely engaged for me to inquire. However, it soon became evident that thoughts of the future played no small part in his immediate reflections. He shortly turned into a dim shop lined with hollowed tree trunks. In the background a little ruby light glowed in front of a shrine. From these recesses the proprietor came forward to greet us with a mournful look of inquiry from one to the other.

Mr. Chung introduced us and turning to me explained, 'This is a coffin shop'.

If the proprietor felt any disappointment on discovering that we were not prospective customers he concealed it with all the courtesy of his race, and the look of anticipatory condolence he had borne disappeared as he talked animatedly of the various

qualities of coffin wood. I learnt that while you could be encased for as little as \$20, you could also pay as much as \$20,000, which at 1s. 3d. to the dollar seemed to me a lot more than any body was worth.

We then crossed the road to a 'paper' shop where I discovered that, however much it might cost you to buy yourself a coffin, once you were underground, your friends and relatives could keep you supplied in the other world with all possible luxuries for a very trifling outlay. They could buy you money—old-fashioned silver and gold or new-fashioned bank notes on the 'Bank of Hell' (to be on the safe side)—motor-cars, yachts, clothes, houses, what you will, all in paper, and send them after you by the simple process of burning them.

Cheered by these thoughts, I was led further up the road and through some iron gates, into a rather out-of-repair asphalted compound, surrounded by closed and shabby booths. In the centre was another block of booths.

'This', said Mr. Chung, 'is the Chinese Recreation Ground.'

It had started to drizzle, but making due allowance for that and the twilight, anything less promising from the point of view of recreation and entertainment I should have found it hard to imagine, but as we made several damp circumambulations of the central *kaaba*, I learnt that it had had its better days, and that now it was in the custody of the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, who let off the booths and applied the proceeds to good works.

While he told me this my wandering eye had glimpsed through several half-opened doors picturesque figures in something which, if not so gaily coloured, seemed rather like the garb of old China. They were clad in long blue gowns with caps surmounted by buttons, and had those long and wispy beards so familiar to us in pictures. I asked who they were.

'Fortune-tellers', said Mr. Chung. 'You should be aware that no Chinese undertakes any matter of personal importance without consulting a fortune-teller or astrologer. Now I come to think of it I am acquainted—er—slightly, very slightly, with one of them.'

After another perambulation of the *kaaba*, peering at the names, Mr. Chung stopped at a door: 'Ah! Here we are, Mr. Li.'

He pushed open the door and there were at once eager protestations of delight from Mr. Li, who came forward to greet us,

while his wife and children smiled at us from the background. Mr. Li was a youngish, jovial character whose figure and countenance suggested that fortune-telling was a much more prosperous (and more light-hearted) affair to him than it was to some of his neighbours, who had seemed thinner, more saddened, even if they looked more in the part. Possibly his condition and circumstances betokened a reputation for accuracy in his predictions, but more probably a greater acquaintance with human frailties.

Mr. Chung suggested I should have my fortune told and Mr. Li expressed his pleasure in suitable terms, though he explained that as it was evening he could not tell my horoscope, but must content himself with my palm. Taking it in his, while his wife put a cup of tea within easy reach of my other hand, he gazed at it earnestly for some minutes, and then, Mr. Chung interpreting, portrayed for me a life of pleasant prospect with no more than a modicum of reasonably to be expected mishaps. I gathered I should not be requiring a coffin for some considerable time.

'For myself,' concluded Mr. Li, 'I feel happy in seeing a countenance such as yours. If you were Chinese and we were living in the Ching Manchu dynasty, you ought to have been one of the ministers. But I can tell you that General Hui Sun Tshi's palm is similar to yours, though yours is even better than his. No doubt about it, you'll find your success this year—next year.'

Mr. Chung overwhelmed me with congratulations on the happy prospects before me and then remarked, rather as an afterthought, 'I recall that there is a race meeting tomorrow; while we are here we might ask our friend what he thinks of the prospects'.

There followed an earnest consultation of some length during which Mr. Chung's countenance, soberly serene, became positively radiant, and when we left our cheerful host, who had refused all offers of remuneration, he was confident that the following afternoon would prove pleasantly lucrative. It was too bad that when I met him at a party a few days later he confessed ruefully, but in a proper spirit of resignation, that he had been \$40 down. I wondered whether my own future would be quite as rosy as Mr. Li had prophesied.

But at the moment we faced the evening's entertainment in lighter mood and came out of the recreation ground to find that the rain had stopped. Little did I think then that my circumambulations there had indeed been on a place of pilgrimage, and that what was now the abode of fortune-tellers was once a green hill, Possession Mount, where the British flag was first hoisted on Hong Kong.

Mr. Chung's obsession with the future had obscured any recollection he might have had with that story of the past, and we were soon swept into the lively atmosphere of a present in which men appeared to care no more for the past than they did for the future.

With the coming of night the streets had taken on even more of a gala appearance. The banners had disappeared in the velvet depths of the darkness above, but in their place neon signs blazed out Chinese characters in a profusion and variety of colour which left Piccadilly Circus unplaced. The Chinese characters robbed all this advertising of much of its vulgarity and instead transformed the scene into a fairyland where jewels hung and shone and dazzled. Most of these signs were in Chinese, but some were in English as well. From up on high one was exhorted to drink beer in violet and green, but Coca-Cola always in the lucky vermilion of China. So prevalent was this latter invitation that one began to believe that Coca-Cola had become the staple food of China.

Indeed, one of my first impressions was that there was an American air about parts of Hong Kong. Further east up Queen's Road 'Battleground Annie' shrieked all too loudly for attention, and other cinemas at that end of the town seemed overpoweringly American. The films had endowed many a citizen of Hong Kong who had never been out of China with a strong American accent, and large, glossy and opulent American cars added a good deal to traffic problems.

However, here near West Point, China, or the British colony's version of it, had the best of it. The brilliantly lit shops offered every conceivable need and luxury from gold, jewellery, clothes, ivory, jade and fancy ware to strange desiccated sea creatures in the shops of marine delicacies, and dried snakes and seahorses in those of Chinese druggists. Shops and stalls overflowed with oranges and apples from California and mangoes from Manila.

Any variety of English and American cigarettes was available every few yards. The prices of everything were extremely high and I wondered how many could buy oranges and apples at 7½d. each, or mangoes at 1s. 3d. Yet one saw workmen buying them, and Lucky Strikes and Camels too. There were any number of restaurants, large, medium and small, most looking extremely inviting and all doing a roaring trade. Canned music came from every shop and restaurant, and a large Chinese tea-shop produced such a volume of sound with its band and singers that its contribution to the general inferno was separately distinguishable. And Mr. Chung and I were ourselves bound for a restaurant, the famous Golden Dragon at West Point, where I was to have my first big Chinese dinner.

West Point is a curious neighbourhood, for while it has no good shops or residences and looks, to say the least, grubby, it is the traditional quarter in which the rich man spends his evenings and seeks his entertainment in ways peculiar to China. Here are two of the great restaurants of Hong Kong, and here in these dismal tenements are the exclusive private clubs with their sing-song girls who help the rich to entertain, and here are some of Hong Kong's best cabarets.

We were to dine with the directors of the Tung Wah hospitals, a group of hospitals formerly entirely run in Chinese methods, but now almost entirely European in their method of management. The directors are all men of substance, and besides spending time and money on these philanthropic duties, they lighten their task with congenial evenings in each other's society, inviting guests, European or Chinese, to their entertainments.

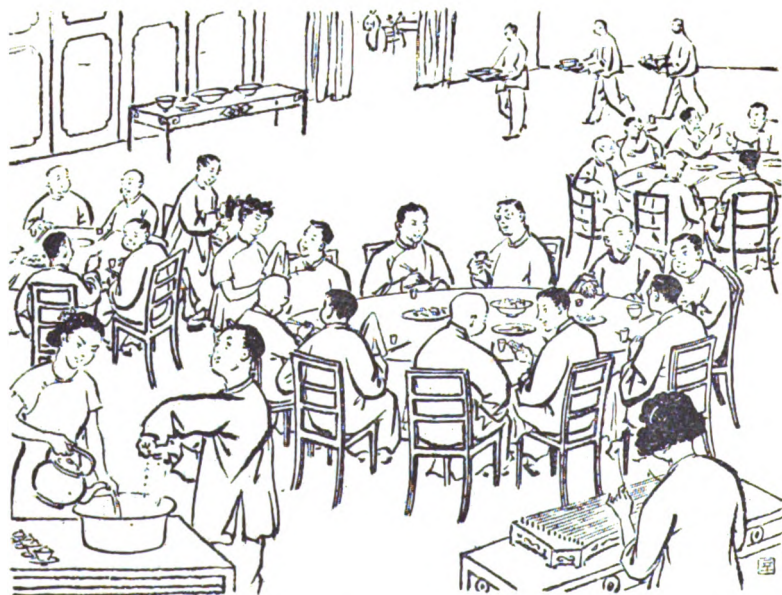
We were wafted by an express lift to the upper regions of this brilliantly illuminated and much-neon-sign-bedecked building, and found ourselves among a thronging mob of well-dressed Chinese, with a deafening clatter of mahjong tiles on blackwood tables arising from every side. A damsel with well-tinted cheeks and lips, in one of those neat little gowns which display the contours of the Chinese female to such advantage, handed me a well-wrung-out hot towel, and following Mr. Chung's lead I wiped my hands and face with it. It is a very pleasant habit which leaves one feeling fresh and clean and yet dry at once. Handing back the towel to the attentive creature at my side, I next had a pen thrust into my hand and was asked to sign my

name on a large piece of red silk. The other guests had painted their names vertically in Chinese characters: fortunately my barbarian ignorance was excused and I was shown a place where I could write it in English horizontally.

Then I shook hands with the Chairman, who introduced me all round, and before many seconds had passed I had dozens of Chinese visiting-cards, giving on one side the names, business addresses, telephone numbers and biographical details of their owners, and on the other the same, I suppose, in Chinese. I could not help wishing that Hong Kong would adopt a custom which I have met in Egypt, that of having your portrait on your card. I knew well that there was no hope of my ever being able to fit one of these cards to a face again.

I was furnished also with a collection of glasses of several varieties of China tea and Scotch whisky and sat down to make friends.

All of them, save Mr. Chung, were fresh acquaintances that evening but they treated me as a long-lost friend, and though I was handling chopsticks for about the first time in my life I had



‘Lighten their task with congenial evenings’ (p. 33)

little sense of strangeness. The Chinese, like many people of the nearer East, are perfect hosts.

I sat in the place of honour, on the left of the Chairman, for, as I was constantly to hear, things are always done the other way round in China. On his right was a most delightful doctor with a dimpled smile and a very naughty twinkle in his eye. With his eyeglass and in his pin-stripe suit he was the embodiment of Harley Street, but so assiduous were he, the president, and the demure little waitress in green standing behind me, in filling my glass with whisky or brandy—almost indifferently, whenever I was not looking—that considerable watchfulness on my part was necessary to avoid confusion between tumblers of tea and almost neat spirits. That I drank as much as I did was due to the constant calls of ‘Yam sing’, the first Chinese expression I learnt and which my mentor and guide on my left interpreted, all too painstakingly, ‘Bottoms up. You have to empty your glass and show it is empty’.

I did not meet Chinese wines that night: indeed, although the Chinese have in my opinion rightly come to the conclusion that no other system of cooking surpasses their own, they seem to be equally certain that Scotch whisky and French brandy are the best drinks.

You know where you are at an Arab dinner when everything is put on the floor at once and you help yourself at your own indiscretion, but when after two substantial courses my friend had said, as the shark’s fin soup appeared, ‘Now the dinner proper begins’, I thought it wise to take a guest’s privilege and ask for a menu. These are not usually provided, but several courses later a menu in Chinese, some two feet in length and one foot wide, appeared followed by a small one in English. This read:

1. Two Entrees: (a) Stewed pigeon eggs and vegetable
(b) Fried quails with bamboo shoots
2. Shark’s fin soup (best quality)
3. Stewed awabi with oyster sauce
4. Double boiled mushroom soup
5. Steamed garoupa
6. Roast chicken
7. Roast prawns (with shell)
8. Noodles
9. Pudding

Tea and fruit

FIRST FOOTSTEPS

A few footnotes may be helpful to those who do not know Chinese cooking. Shark's fins are in themselves absolutely tasteless. Their merit lies somewhere concealed in their glutinous quality. They are therefore always presented with a base of something else—'best quality' meant chicken.

Awabi is a species of shellfish. It has some of the consistency of leather and looks rather like the tongue of a shoe. Many Europeans think it tastes like it too, but I found it good, though its extremely slippery nature makes it an awkward customer for an amateur to tackle with chopsticks. Garoupa is a first-class fish.

The only really trying part of the menu was the 'with shell' after roast prawns. The correct method of dealing with these animals is apparently to put the whole creature in your mouth, crunch it up, and remove the bits of shell with the chopsticks. The same complication arises with chicken, pork, etc., for they are chopped up into small pieces across the bones and one fishes about with chopsticks for obstinate splinters.

The din all round was absolutely terrific. The accompaniment of mahjong from neighbouring parties rose continuously and so did the roar of traffic thundering and echoing up from the street. Everybody shouted their conversation, mostly in Chinese, as they had otherwise no hopes of being heard. Fumes of good food and spirits and tobacco dimmed the atmosphere and one's mind. All one was conscious of in the confusion was that it was a good party.

Suddenly there was a deafening explosion.

'Come and see!' The indefatigable Mr. Chung seized my arm and rushed me to a window. Seven storeys below in the street a rising cloud of dense smoke was stabbed by bright flashes and there was a crackle of explosions like rapid rifle fire. Soon the smoke enveloped us and eddied thickly into the room. People dashed to close windows.

'It's a wedding', shouted my friend. 'At least a thousand dollars' worth of crackers there.'

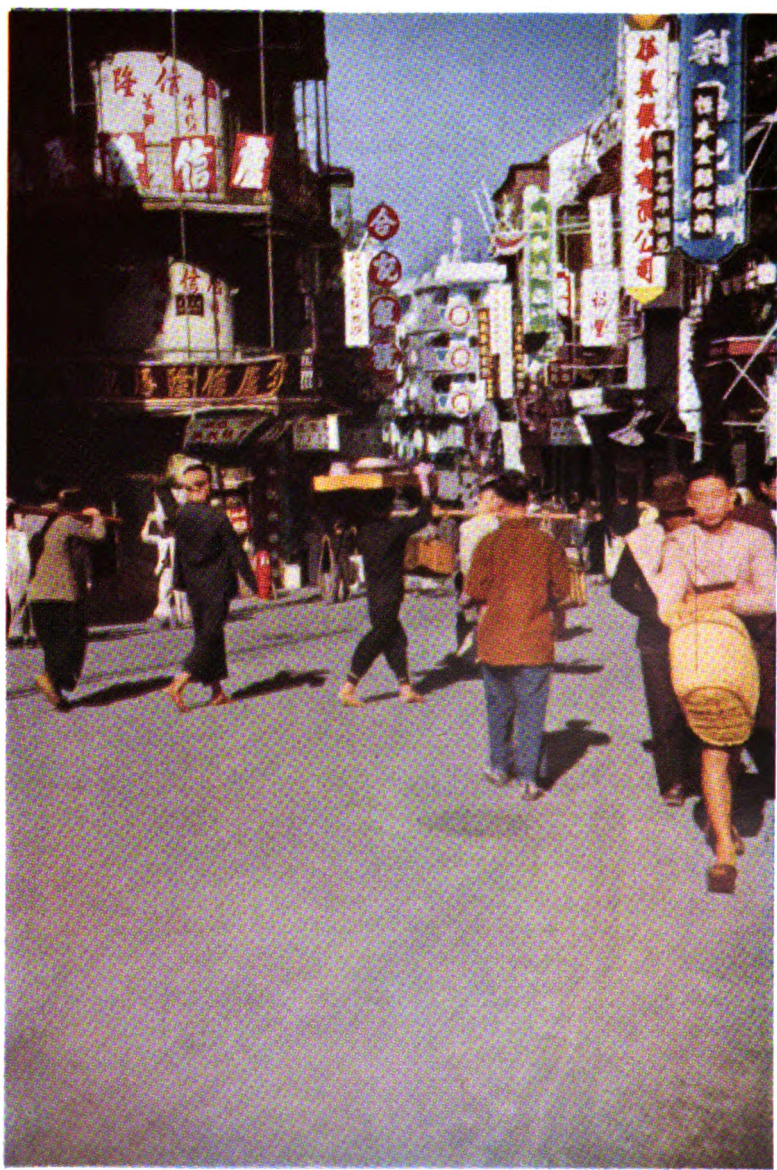
'A wedding!' yelled I. 'I thought it was the Nationalists bombing the city.'

We returned to the table to find ourselves involved in a series of *Yam Sing* visits to other tables, a sort of Chinese version of visiting rounds in the 'Lancers'. The dinner ended with the passing round of hot steamed towels, piled high on a salver and



N.E. VIEW OF VICTORIA, 1843. Aquatint by J. Prendergast. *Chater Collection*

‘ Few thought much of the new acquisition ’ (p. 27)



‘ Painted signs and decorated pillars gave to the scene a musical comedy setting ’ (p. 29)

PLATE IV

handed to each guest with tongs. Much refreshed after this, I was now ready to go home. After shaking hands with all our hosts, Mr. Chung and I were seen to the lift by the chairman and the charming wicked doctor. There were more handshakes and the door closed.

The lift, however, shot upwards. We were decanted on an upper floor, where, much to my surprise, I was greeted afresh by the hosts from whom I had so recently parted, and led into a cabaret where extremely lively dance music was being played. We all sat round a long table with empty chairs at each side of us. In no more time than it takes to tell these were filled with charming dancing partners and I found my green waitress seated on one side of me and a taxi girl from Shanghai on the other. Only tea may be served in cabarets, and so on tea we danced till closing time, and then the lift really did take us to street level.

It had, on the whole, been quite a varied evening.

CHAPTER THREE

The Heart of Hong Kong

LOOKING DOWN from the balcony of our hotel room high over Pedder Street, one of Hong Kong's busiest streets, we found the traffic a never-ending source of astonishment. Through all the hours of daylight cars passed up and down, nose to tail. If anyone arrived at the hotel with luggage to discharge it meant a traffic jam extending out of sight.

We could just see the corner at which Des Voeux Road crossed Pedder Street. Along it big green double-decker trams clanged and rumbled their noisy way in almost perpetual procession, through the streams of large cars, red buses, taxis, lorries and rickshaws. The pavements were thick with jostling humanity. Whenever the traffic lights permitted it dense streams spilled out across the roadways. It was useless to attempt a passage through the traffic except at pedestrian crossings, and then only when the lights or the smart Chinese policeman on point duty permitted. But the crossings were well organized and clearly marked by signs with a trunkless pair of

rather American-looking legs tripping from the pavement, in so lighthearted a fashion that they both reassured and refreshed the weary pedestrian to a fresh spurt. And a spurt was necessary to get across before the lights changed.

I never saw such traffic. There is a small square in that central area of Hong Kong about a hundred yards square. In one day between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. the police counted 47,000 cars going round it. There are over 20,000 civilian vehicles registered in Hong Kong and the motorist has long given up the hope of finding parking space. For that matter the pedestrian no longer expects room to walk on the pavements.

He does not seem to have much better chances of getting on buses and trams at some hours of the day either. One generally saw 'Bus full' notices and passengers were packed on both decks of the trams. The Hong Kong trams in 1949 carried 109 million passengers. They run the length of the city of Hong Kong from Shau Ki Wan in the east to Kennedy Town in the west, over 19 miles of track. The island buses, serving the main roads on Hong Kong island's 32 square miles, travelled $4\frac{1}{2}$ million miles in the same year and carried 36 million passengers. Those on the mainland, which serve Kowloon and the New Territories, a matter of 273 square miles, went $11\frac{1}{4}$ million miles and carried over 90 million passengers.

Crowded, too, are the excellent ferry services which ply between Hong Kong and Kowloon. Stand at the Star Ferry pier on Connaught Road between 9 and 10 in the morning and the sight very much resembles that at a London terminus about the same time. There is the same look of being hunted by the clock, under almost every arm there is a newspaper—here mostly in Chinese—and there is the same assortment of brief-bags. Perhaps there are fewer hats, not one on a Chinese female head, certainly fewer raincoats and umbrellas, but otherwise it is much the same and one forgets that most of these faces are Chinese in registering the impression that they have the same look as those in London.

This Star Ferry made 120,000 crossings (a crossing takes seven minutes) in 1949 and carried 35 million passengers. In the same year the Yaumati Ferry carried $46\frac{1}{4}$ million passengers and 750,000 motor vehicles!

And the noise! With the narrow streets and high buildings

acting like a megaphone, the roar of the traffic, the clamour of voices, endless hammering, the throbbing of machinery, make London seem like a quiet country town.

Relatively the harbour was as full of life, traffic and noise as the streets. This great harbour is the heart of Hong Kong, pumping in the trade which is Hong Kong's life-blood from the outside world and pumping it out again into arteries which lead all over the world. On its 17 square miles of untroubled water are to be seen at almost any time representatives of the sea trade of every nation, arriving, anchored, or departing, and amongst them pass numberless little craft, ferries, tugs with lighters, and launches. Hooting, the blowing of sirens from great ships, the steam whistles of smaller fry call attention to these noisy manifestations of the age of steam, but amongst them unperturbed by all the bustle glide the graceful forms of craft familiar in these waters for a millennium or more before steam vessels appeared. With their brown sails, ribbed like bats' wings, the junks and sampans soon attract the eye of every visitor and make the fingers of every would-be artist itch. It is easy to see that this junk traffic is by no means the least important part of Hong Kong's arterial system.

All along the waterfront the constant connection between the sea and land is kept up by thousands of busy cheerful Cantonese. Side by side the junks lie closely packed with their sterns against the quay. In the middle of the road wait the lorries that bring or carry away goods. Between junk, connected with the shore by a single plank, and lorry busy coolies carry bales and many unfamiliar objects.

There are 17,000 junks and such craft registered in Hong Kong. About 1,200 of these are ocean-going craft making voyages of usually up to 500 miles, but most are engaged in the fishing trade. You have only to watch the cargo junks on the waterfront for a few minutes to realize that junks are not just ships but homes. The people who live on them have no shore homes and here you see a baby, surely not more than two years old, toddling along the plank on a visit of exploration to the shore. There is his mother, quite unconcerned, dealing with her domestic affairs up forward. She sits there polishing her pots and pans and keeps a spotless home. The family washing blows gaily from the rigging.

Many and varied are the cargoes carried by the junks. Much of the unfamiliar looking products of China are brought into the Colony by them, to be bulked and exported in prosaic packings to the Western world. And in Hong Kong, imports from the world at large are repacked and distributed in small quantities by junks to many places in China. Many are engaged in local traffic. The vegetables of the New Territories are brought to the island in junks, and that most unsavoury of cargoes, nightsoil, is shipped by junk to the New Territories to be used in the growing of vegetables.

Right on the waterfront and controlling the endless activities of this great harbour stands the office of the Director of Marine, Mr. Jolly. I asked him for any striking or picturesque facts about the port. 'There's nothing picturesque about it', he exclaimed. 'It's nothing but a headache! I was in Lagos before I came here,' he went on, 'but that's nothing. I was hit in the eyes when I first came here, with the size of the port and the crowding. When I got back to Liverpool on leave it seemed as if nothing was moving. The whole day long here, ships and junks are moving.'

In 1947 46,547 vessels entered and cleared the port, in 1948 55,344, and in 1949 no fewer than 66,815 of 23,040,126 tons! Over two million passengers came and left by them. More than 23,000 of the vessels entered and cleared in 1949 were junks and steam vessels under 60 net registered tons.

'That's one of the unique features of Hong Kong—there's no coasting. Once you leave the harbour you're in foreign waters. That and its being perched on the Asiatic mainland, being so cosmopolitan, and the huge number of native craft. And not one of the junks is owned by a man with a British passport. They are all Chinese aliens.'

The telephone interrupted the flow of staccato sentences. Someone wanting help. 'Just come along', said Jolly. 'You get everything here. Just show you know how to start and stop the ship and you'll be a full-blown navigator.' He put the receiver down. 'Every damn thing you do in London can be done here. The department's all British-staffed. We run examinations for masters. Health, lighthouses, entering and clearing of ships, manifests, etc., it's all done in this one building.'

He took us in to see the Marine Court. It had a dignified,

old-fashioned, Victorian air about it with its solid chimney-piece, bench and tables. There was not a sign of anything Chinese about it. We saw crews being signed on down below.

There are 65 ship, boat-building and repair yards in the Colony, of which all but nine deal with smaller craft and junks. Repairs alone represent a major industry and ships of all nations use the facilities, which are the finest in the Far East.

The principal commercial wharves, piers, and warehouses or godowns are on the mainland. So great were the difficulties of moving goods to the mainland owing to the disturbances in China that at the end of 1949 Hong Kong's godowns were chock-a-block with goods—mainly paper, raw cotton, sulphate of ammonia and wool-tops. 'Hong Kong's true role, of course,' said the annual report of the Chamber of Commerce, 'is that of China's entrepôt . . . she is being forced to play . . . the uncongenial one of China's warehouse.'

With China's international trade largely at a standstill, Hong Kong increasingly monopolized it. The port developed a great reputation for quick dispatch of vessels. Regular communications by sea were available to almost anywhere in the world. Twenty-one companies had services to North America and 18 to Japan. There were five working to the United Kingdom, but apart from India and Far Eastern services there were also regular services to South America, Australia, various countries in Europe, North and South Africa, and the Persian Gulf.

If its harbour is Hong Kong's heart, the business centre alongside it is no less easily recognizable as its brains, and you have not to be long in Hong Kong to feel how it symbolizes the spirit of the place. Its still prevailing Victorian solidity expresses perfectly the turn of the century and beyond the thought of that time Hong Kong has barely emerged. Here is one of the biggest surviving shrines of private enterprise and on these buildings will be found the names of great firms long established in the East, notably banks, shipping firms and insurance companies, with names known all over the world. And of course amongst the great trading houses there stands out that of Jardine Matheson and Company, still supreme as the type and ideal of the old China House.

There is a flavour of the City of London in this area, but there is no Whitehall. Commerce dominates everything and

Government offices are for the most part tucked away in commercial buildings. Such few buildings as are dedicated entirely to Government activities seem very much the poor relations of those of the business firms.

Gradually the Victorian blocks are being replaced by new and prosperous structures. Dominating all the business centre is the creation of Jardine's and the other great houses—the huge monolithic pile of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation. This in Hong Kong is The Bank and is scarcely otherwise referred to. In its up-to-date modernity it symbolizes the belief that even if the thought which rules Hong Kong is not that which is current in England today, there is nothing the matter with the money it makes.

This mighty building also conceals important Government offices in its air-conditioned interior, and even its site can be construed as a parable, for it is the site of the old City Hall and Hong Kong has no longer a civic centre. Nor has it concert hall, picture gallery, museum or other centre of culture. It is of course accidental that the Bank thus symbolizes the subordination of civic splendour and culture to commerce, for the old City Hall was found to be unsafe, and it is of course accidental that by its side is rising the tall spire of the Bank of China, now a Chinese Communist Government undertaking, destined to be 17 storeys high and to overtop The Bank by several storeys. Let us hope there will be no parable in that.

CHAPTER FOUR

On the Peak

I NEVER CEASED to wonder at the impressiveness of Hong Kong and I felt it strange that I had not appreciated its stature and importance before seeing it. I said something to this effect one morning as I was walking along crowded Connaught Road with one of Hong Kong's Taipans. He smiled and told me that a short time ago, when he was in London, he went into Charing Cross Post Office to post rather a fat letter to Hong Kong. Not

knowing how many stamps to put on it, he asked the girl behind the counter. Feeling sure from her answer that she thought Hong Kong was a foreign destination, he ventured to question the amount she quoted by remarking that Hong Kong was British.

‘Oh no,’ she said; ‘Hong Kong is in China.’

My friend insisted that it was a British colony and assured her that if she would be so kind as to look it up she would find he was right. Not at all convinced, she rather crossly got out the tome to which Post Office officials refer for this sort of information and discovered that Hong Kong was indeed included among British colonies.

‘Well,’ she admitted grudgingly, ‘I see it is, but it must be very recent.’

This story can arouse a wide variety of reflections, ranging from the possibly comparative unimportance of Hong Kong to the inadequacy of British education, but I take it as justifying the necessity of recording some of the basic facts about Hong Kong which I myself had to look up before going there. The facts are sufficiently confusing to make the young lady’s ignorance at least understandable, and I discovered for myself that they are by no means clearly stated in books of reference. The colony of Hong Kong got put together in a very untidy way.

First of all there is the Island of Hong Kong with an area of 32 square miles. In 1860 the Convention of Peking increased the area of the colony by adding the tip of the Kowloon Peninsula ($3\frac{1}{4}$ square miles) and a small island off it known as Stonecutter’s Island ($\frac{1}{4}$ square mile). Thus far the Colony consisted of territory ceded outright, $35\frac{1}{2}$ square miles of land legally as British as the islands in which we live.

In 1898 the rest of the peninsula of Kowloon together with 75 islands and a considerable amount of sea were *leased* from China for a period of 99 years. An official publication gives the area of the mainland thus leased as 270 square miles and of the islands as 90, but nowadays the total land area leased is stated to be 355 square miles. This makes the total area of the Colony $390\frac{1}{4}$ square miles, generally stated as 391. It is just within the tropics, but a favourite catch for the new traveller is based on the fact that you do not have to cross the Equator to get there by sea, via Suez.

Disliking handbook information of this kind, I was fortunate in finding that Hong Kong is one of those places with a vantage point from which one can easily take in basic geographical facts. Eighteen hundred feet is, to be sure, not a very impressive height in itself, but, with its steep northern slope so close to the great city, the Peak towers impressively, indeed strikingly and majestically, over it. You can climb the Peak by car, but, thanks to a certain Mr. Findlay Smith who conceived the idea of a funicular railway, it is much more interesting to do so by the Peak Tram, which was opened in 1888. I had looked on the ride as a thing that must be 'done', but had been inclined to underrate it as one of those too-much-advertised attractions for tourists. The Peak tramway, however, is a real experience and Hong Kong is rightly proud of it.

We had a holiday feeling as soon as we entered the charming little station up Garden Road, 100 feet above the sea. It is like a well-kept country station with an air of flowers and leisure about it, a sweet-stall, postcards, even a dress shop and a weighing machine. Yet the station is busy enough. Ordinarily the tram carries 4,000 passengers a day (in 1949 the total was over a million) and this year at the Cheung Yeung festival, when people go up to the highest place to commemorate the dream of a woman, the tram ran 109 cars and carried 10,565 people in the day. It seems that everybody had laughed at the lady when she said she had dreamed the village was going to be destroyed, so she went off to the top of a hill alone and when she got back the village *had* been destroyed by floods.

Reasonably, quietly, the tram starts on its ten-minute run up the mountain. On each side houses cling perilously to the steep slopes, and gardens display a glory of blooms and palms, of hibiscus and hydrangeas. In a very short time, by some strange illusion, the houses one passes appear to lean right away from the hillside and to be tumbling over. After the first three stations one is in the midst of a primeval jungle and the slow-moving open car seems unsafe, for one almost expects jungle animals to appear. This jungle is so impenetrable that it is ridiculous to think that a great city is only a few minutes away.

Too few minutes bring you to Peak Station at 1,305 feet and you step out into a fresher world, anything up to ten degrees cooler than the city below. Five hundred feet above, with quite

VIEW FROM THE PEAK

an easy paved way to its summit, stands Victoria Peak, and from it one can appreciate Hong Kong's geography. Here one is on the highest point of a range of conical hills running from east to west. At first, however, geography is far from one's thoughts, for the scenery is quite breathtaking in its beauty.

On the side on which we have come up, the dense growth of forest creased with deep gullies gradually fades out and the streets and houses of the city are spread out in relief. Even the great Bank looks smaller than a rubble pile from here and no more important. Sharp cut along the waterfront is a sheet of smooth and deep blue glass on which ships look like tiny toys.

Beyond the harbour, about a mile from the shore, parallel to and equal in height to the range on which we are, stand the nine peaks of Kowloon, from which the peninsula takes its name—Nine Dragons. In the far distance are the blue and grey mountains of China. In between are the mountains of the New Territories. Seven miles to the north-west, a wisp of cloud clinging to the highest shows you are looking at Tai Mo Shan, Big Hat Mountain, 3,140 feet, the highest mountain in the Colony. The white hat of mist it generally wears about its crown gives it its name.

Down on the other, southern, side of the island beneath us is a very different scene. There are steep green gullies leading to the deeply-indented coastline where white foam laps at the beaches of rocky coves. They look like embroidery edging to the glossy sheet of blue, island-studded sea. In all the scene almost the only movement is the silent fluttering of those white foam crests far below. There is little sign of human life, the most conspicuous being the threads of winding roads laid over the green hillsides. As far as the eye can see there are islands which seem to float motionless on the sea. There is an ethereal quality in the scene.

You can see many of Hong Kong's 75 islands from this vantage point and one of them, Lantau, away to the west, is larger than Hong Kong Island. Roughly it has much the same shape and you can gain a very good idea of what Hong Kong was like in 1840 from looking at Lantau.

This thought brings home a startling appreciation of the crowding of Hong Kong. The Colony's area is, as we have seen, 391 square miles. The actual estimate of the population

ON THE PEAK

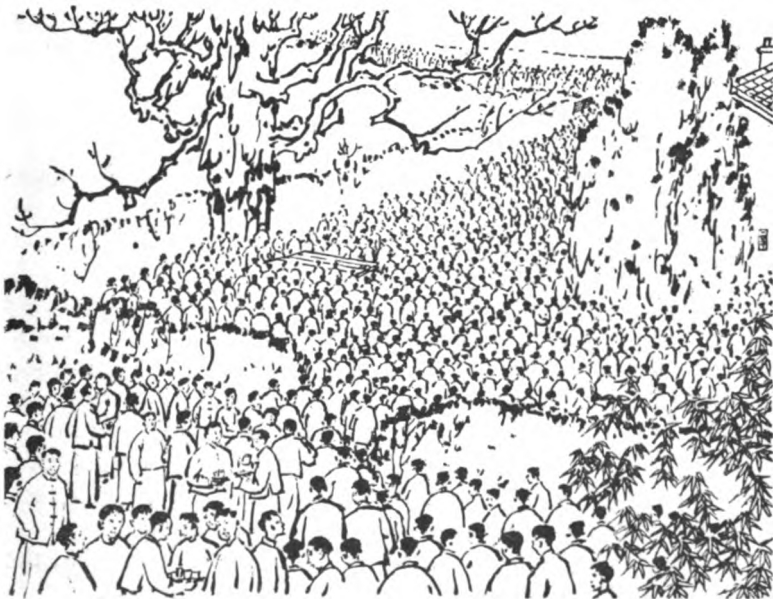
in May 1950 was 2,360,000. That makes about 6,000 to the square mile. Compare this with New Zealand, which has 1,800,000 people with 104,000 square miles for them to move about in. Tiny Gibraltar has 15,000 people to each of its two square miles, far and away the densest population of any 'country' which *Whitaker* gives. But there are few areas other than Hong Kong which approach such figures. Yet here on the Peak one can see how much of this small island is without extensive signs of habitation and one could find many places in the New Territories with even fewer. The breakdown guesses at Hong Kong's population are never up to date, but let us take the latest recorded ones at the end of 1948 when the population was estimated at 1,800,000. The city of Victoria—the capital—and the Peak had about 887,400, and the villages of Hong Kong Island 70,100; Kowloon had a population of 699,500, and the New Territories 200,000. Included in these figures is the—literally—floating population estimated at 114,400. From this it will be seen that the vast majority of the people are crowded into Hong Kong and Kowloon cities—no more than ten square miles. There are areas in those cities with over 2,000 to the acre! My own house and garden at home cover one acre and I try to imagine what it would look like if 2,000 Chinese came to tea!

It is easy to see from the Peak that you could not walk ten miles in any direction on the island without coming to the sea. It is said to be eleven miles long at its greatest length and five miles wide at its greatest width, but everywhere except on its northern coast it is deeply indented and there are therefore a number of splendid natural harbours such as Aberdeen. That fascinating fishing port is only indirectly connected with Aberdeen in Scotland. It was not some homesick Scot who so christened it: it was named after Lord Aberdeen who was Foreign Secretary from 1841 to 1850. In the same way Stanley, the first British settlement on the island and perhaps now more famous as the site of the prison and internment camp where so many Britons suffered during the Japanese occupation, was called after his colleague Lord Stanley (afterwards Earl of Derby), Secretary of State for the Colonies.

It was the fashion of the time to call the towns of new colonies after the statesmen of the day and the Empire is sprinkled with many names which would otherwise be forgotten. Governors

and other local worthies had generally to be content with streets. Encircling the Peak runs a beautiful road, Lugard Road, named after perhaps the most enlightened of all colonial governors. Lugard's name is so bound up with Africa, and especially with Nigeria and with Indirect Rule, that one is apt to forget he was once Governor of this Colony. Hong Kong commemorates officially many other names connected with its past. In some colonies these names stick, often with curious pronunciations, and there are many instances of this in Hong Kong. On the whole, however, the Chinese go their own way, using their own names, and Aberdeen is, for instance, known to them as Hong Kong Tsai or Little Hong Kong.

Aberdeen is, indeed, the site of the original Hong Kong. The first British sailors who used it as a watering place called it Waterfall Bay, a name now given to another place. About a mile from where the rocky stream discharges into Aberdeen harbour was the village of Heung Kong Wai, which being interpreted means 'the Walled Village of the Fragrant Lagoon'. It is easy to see how it happened. The sailors learnt this name,



'If two thousand Chinese came to tea!' (p. 46)

pronounced it Hong Kong and applied it to the whole island. When the present capital was built it was named Victoria and officially still is Victoria, but the city being in effect Hong Kong the Colony, almost everyone, British and Chinese, calls it Hong Kong. Its present bounds extend far beyond the official bounds of Victoria. Indeed the whole length of the island seafront from Shau Ki Wan in the east to Kennedy Town and beyond in the west is, since the war, almost a continuous built-up area. Thus the name Hong Kong serves, as in the case of Zanzibar, for city, island and the whole territory, and it is only by the context one learns which is referred to.

With all these reveries up in the heights, evening is coming on and one feels a chill. It is time to descend again to the heat of the city. The difference between the Peak and the city is as that between ice-cream and pea-soup.

As a matter of fact it never got unbearably hot during March, April and early May when we were in Hong Kong. Thanks to the monsoons Hong Kong has a sub-tropical climate. With the north-east monsoon it has a cool winter, but when the south-west monsoon blows, from May to August, it brings warm, damp winds from the Equator. June to October is the season of typhoons, which can be very violent and have done enormous damage.

Temperatures range from 40°F. to 95°F. and humidity in spring and summer exceeds 95 per cent. People who live on the Peak have to have drying-cupboards, for they live in the clouds at this time. The summer is also the rainy season and three-quarters of Hong Kong's rain (mean annual rainfall 84.26 inches) falls between May and September.

Tonight, however, it is clear and fine, and on going down we are struck by the loveliness of the jewelled lights set here and there on the dark mountain side. Below, Hong Kong is as lit up as a fairground, but the variety of coloured lights in the city and in Kowloon beyond make me think not only of jewels but of fireworks, and it would hardly be possible to make more of a show for a coronation or a peace celebration. The harbour too is sprinkled with lights stationary and lights moving.

Looking back to the dim form of the Peak from the city, the lights of Lugard Road look like a crown about its brow.

CHAPTER FIVE

Around and About

UNTIL SHORTLY before the time of our visit to Hong Kong it was true to say that, after Heath Row, Hong Kong's airport at Kai Tak was the busiest in the world. Now with the traffic to China at a standstill only about a quarter of the number of passengers are handled. But 'I'm an optimistic sort of bird,' said Mr. Moss, the Director of Civil Aviation; 'I believe it will all be back in a few months' to a year's time. Hong Kong will be the air Clapham Junction of the Far East'.

'It's one of the world's worst aerodromes', he went on. 'Bad approaches and no room for multiple runways—in fact runways can really only be used in one direction. So all operations are confined to daylight except in emergency. But H.M.G. are giving us a loan of over 3 million pounds to get on with a new airfield in the New Territories. We want Comet jet airliners to be able to land here, bringing London within 24 hours of Hong Kong.'

We pondered over this craze for speed. 'It's the world demand for speed and more speed that makes these things necessary. The business man wants speed and gets it, so we all have to put up with it. Fifteen to eighteen years ago life here went on at a pleasant tempo, now everyone is busy making money and you get caught up in the rush.'

With the growth of air travel many more people see Hong Kong for brief periods, and, as there is no available guide-book, an account of some of its sights may be useful to them, besides adding colour and detail to the picture presented to the reader at a distance.

I myself found the Chinese shops an endless source of interest, and the farther away they were from the central districts the more intriguing they were. Lascar Row, on the island, and its neighbourhood is a fascinating area of junk shops. Here are to be found genuine antiques of great beauty and curiosity as well as endless fakes. It is best not to spend a large sum of money on such things without expert advice. The curio dealers formed an association in 1946 and have a club-room where selected

antiques are housed and used to school apprentices in the different periods. The association does its best to keep up a responsible standard.

The visitor with a sense of adventure who wants to get in and out of his own difficulties has certainly got a hard task in front of him if he wishes to find any particular street. Curiously enough there are no useful street plans. The difficulty arises over the street names. Not a tenth of the population knows the English names. The situation is well explained in this extract from *Hong Kong Around and About*, an excellent little book which is unfortunately quite unobtainable:

A few of the English street names are easily given a Chinese phonetic equivalent, for instance Pedder Street becomes Ped A Kai, and Hollywood Road, Ho Lei Woo To, but generally it is not so simple. Very few Chinese would recognize Queen's Road by this name, or even by its proper Chinese equivalent Wong Hau Tai To, but if one mentions Tai To Chung, Tung, or Sai, Big Road Central, East, or West, they will all understand. Des Voeux Road is sometimes called Tak Fu To, the nearest phonetic approximation, but everybody knows it as Tin Che Lo, Electric Tram Road. Wyndham Street is sometimes spoken of as Wai Nam Kai, but the most popular name for it is Mai Fa Kai, Buy and Sell Flowers Street. . . . Who not having some knowledge of Chinese could know that Suet Chong Kai was Icehouse Street, and that Mosque Street was called Mo Lo Miu Kai, Indian Temple Street? . . . Again if a man asks for Park Road in Chinese, Yau To, he is probably told 'No savvy'. The index gives it as Pak To. Getting a little confused he may then try to be directed to the Praya (the sea-front) and ask for Pray Ah. After he has worked himself into a fever trying to explain, someone may inform him that the Praya is known as Hoi Pong. If a European were asked by a Chinese the way to Moh Sing Ling To, the Hill from which we can touch the Stars, he would be completely nonplussed unless he had studied the street index and so knew that what was wanted was Mount Davis Road. Sometimes a man is right in asking for a place by its literal Chinese translation, as in the case of Yat, Yut, or Sing Kai, Sun, Moon, or Star Street, but quite often he is not. . . . There are countless examples of this confusion but these few will suffice to show the absurdity of the present system of street names from the point of view of both Chinese and foreign inhabitants.

The sightseeing visitor generally expects to see ancient historic buildings or ruins, and here of course Hong Kong, particularly Hong Kong Island, cannot oblige, for it contains nothing man-made more than a hundred years old. Nevertheless the hundred-year-old Cathedral Church of St. John and the Roman Catholic Cathedral, built between 1875 and 1894, as

well as a number of other churches of various denominations, are interesting. There is a First Church of Christ Scientist, an Orthodox Church, a Rhenish Mission Church, a Seventh Day Adventist Memorial Church, and many others. Most of them have Chinese priests and pastors. Some churches are architecturally interesting for their compromise between traditional church architecture and Chinese architecture.

The University, dating from 1911, is worth a visit, although the great dome still remains unroofed after war damage. The two most interesting clubs are perhaps the famous and exclusive Hong Kong Club, with imposing premises overlooking the waterfront, and the Club Lusitano, the centre of the Portuguese community. Both have the dignified atmosphere of nineteenth-century London clubs, and a very historic air about them.

When driving round try hard to get a driver with a reasonable amount of English. Tsing, our delightful little driver, had little English but wonderful manners. It was very rare for him to be late for an appointment, but if he were traffic had to wait while he made the most charming and formal apology (beginning always 'Dear Sir') and gave a full explanation. He had no use for bad road manners. One day we had to travel for miles behind an army lorry which would not pull to one side. 'He cowboy,' said Tsing severely, 'no gentleman.' He learnt his English from *The Count of Monte Cristo*. It came out and was feverishly thumbed over whenever a word eluded us. One day I pointed to a white pagoda upon the hillside in Happy Valley and asked what it was.

'That Lady Law's place', I understood Tsing to say. Never having heard of the lady I pursued the matter. Out came *Monte Cristo* and he found the expression 'in Edmund's place'. 'That man in place Law', said Tsing. I was still nonplussed.

'Law? Who's he?'

'Lord, gentleman, wife lady', explained Tsing patiently. 'He in place lord.'

What he really meant was that the owner was so rich that he was like a lord!

Thus we came to one of Hong Kong's most curious sights, the garden of Aw Boon Haw, the Tiger Balm king, which he generously lets the public wander over at will. At Castle Peak on the mainland a well-known Hong Kong family, the

Kadoories, have a delightful garden in which there is a curious Chinese grotto with an enormous dragon wandering over it. It is, I believe, one of the finest of these expressions of Chinese landscape-gardening in South China. Horace Kadoorie told me that it had been designed for the family by an opium smoker who sat in his pipe dreams in the garden and materialized in concrete the tortuous thoughts that came to him. On seeing Mr. Aw's garden I felt he must have employed a whole battalion of opium smokers. Tiger Balm, as every visitor to the Far East probably knows, is a cure for every known complaint, which has brought its inventor a vast fortune, much of which is spent in philanthropic works. Concrete tigers, *au naturel*, or in fancy waistcoats, are one of the main themes of the garden, but the hillside is covered with representations of all sorts of scenes, natural, historical and mythical, in which animals, monsters, humans and fairies, all in brightly painted concrete, abound. The white pagoda, which drew us here, stands out above these scenes, but if you should climb its 148 steps the view from the top is rather disappointing as hills block the distant views. The two brothers who conceived the idea of this garden, Aw Boon Haw and Aw Boon Par (who is dead), have each a temple dedicated to him, and the latter is also commemorated by a statue in sombre black with this inscription:

Dedicated to the Memory of Aw Boon Par who dreamt of the Future, lived in the Present, and learnt eternal truths from the Past, and to the continuance of those sparkling gems of charity and goodwill of Aw Boon Haw.

There are other extravaganzas in Hong Kong but they are not so easily accessible and are in use as private dwelling-places. Two of the most famous are Euston and Eucliffe. Anyone passing the former will be surprised to find in Hong Kong such an imposing exterior of the kind now passed away in England, and apparently named after a railway station. In fact it was built by a Chinese millionaire who had never been in England but had the greatest possible admiration for things English and European. His name was Mr. Eu and the houses he built were European in a big way. Eucliffe is built on the cliffside at Repulse Bay, one of Hong Kong's most popular bathing beaches, with a luxury hotel close by. Except for its state of preservation Eucliffe is a medieval castle complete with armour and all the

KOWLOON CITY

expensive European things of an ornate nature which can be imagined. In the upstairs regions the walls are hung with an incredibly extensive collection of nudes in oils. Anything Chinese in the house takes its place as something as exotic as it would be in an English home.

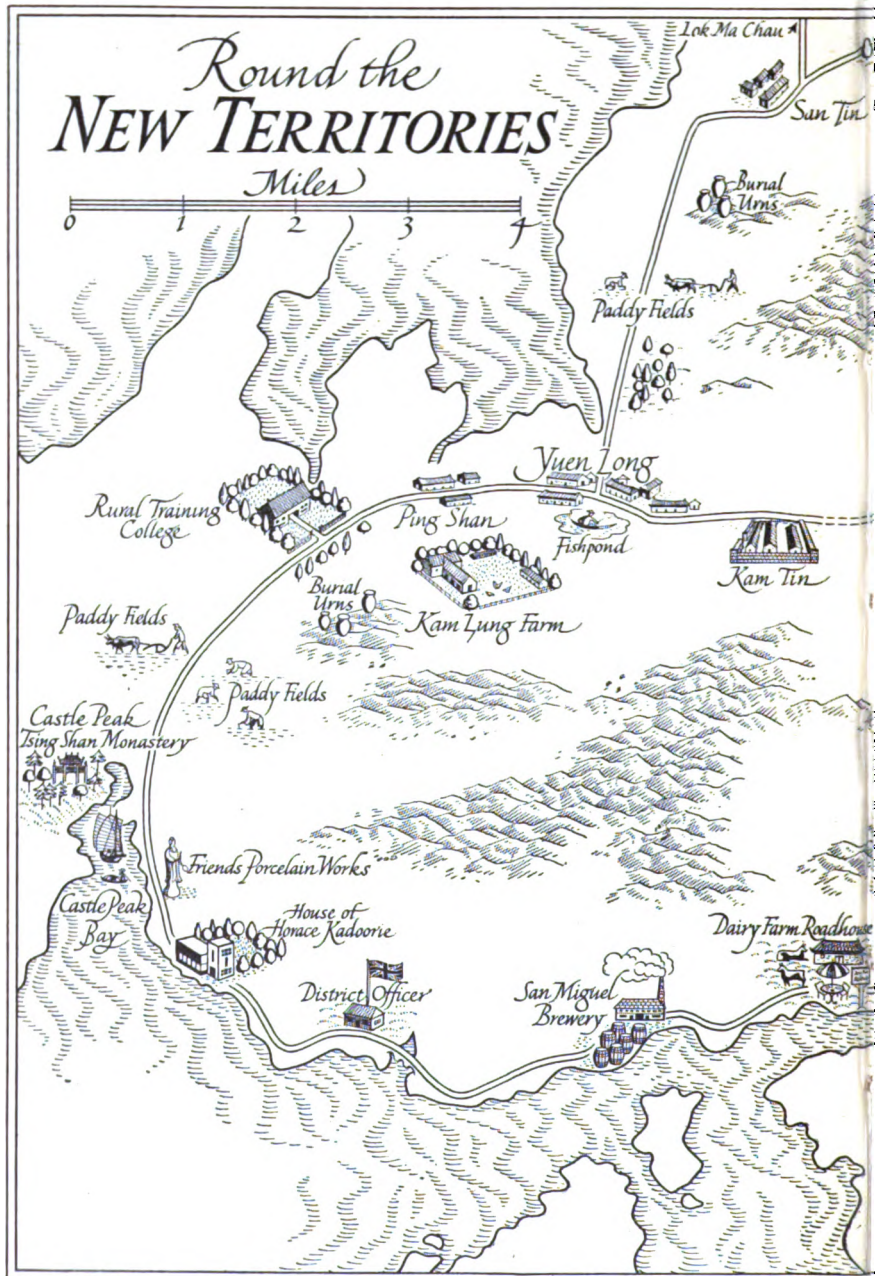
When the New Territories were leased in 1898 an area of about 700 feet by 400 feet preserved Chinese jurisdiction, in so far as might be consistent with military requirements for Hong Kong's defence. This area was known as old Kowloon City. Relations between the people in Kowloon City and their neighbours in the ceded area of British Kowloon seem to have been friendly enough before the lease took place. At any rate the latter apparently went to the old city to indulge in gambling, forbidden by the British, for in 1890 a regulation prescribed dismissal for civil servants who did so. The Chinese also had the neighbourly practice of beheading criminals in whose disposal the British were interested. There is extant in several books a rather gruesome photograph of the decapitation of the *Namoa* pirates in 1891, and in 1896 they beheaded a man who had killed a constable in Hong Kong.

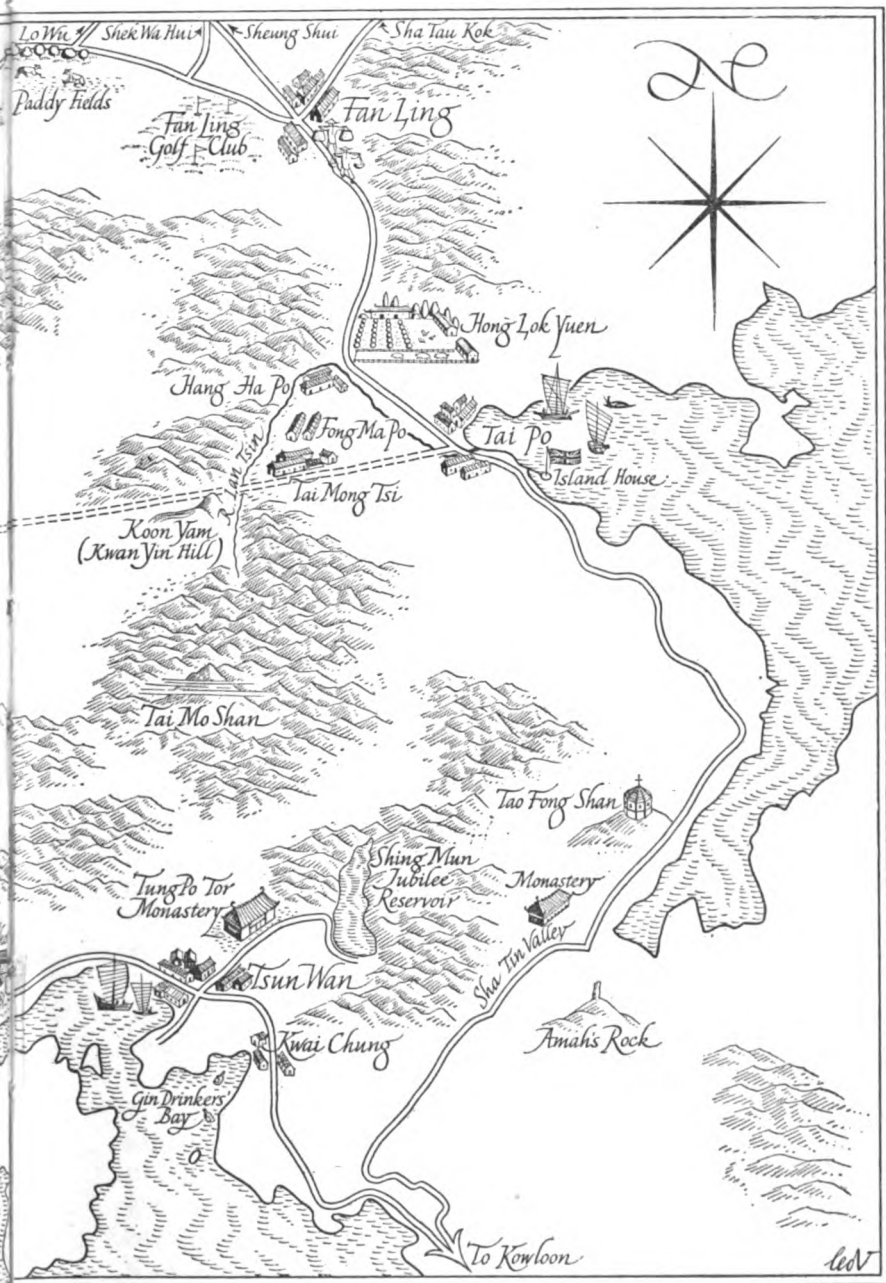
This Chinese island did not long survive the conclusion of the lease, for owing to disturbances which took place while the New Territories were being occupied the British cancelled the arrangement. The Chinese have, however, never waived their claim to jurisdiction and 'homesick' Chinese sometimes go and muse over it as Chinese territory. Nowadays there is nothing whatever to see there—the last of the walls were destroyed by the Japanese, and there is little more than the rather insanitary squatters' huts to be found in many parts of Kowloon and Hong Kong. They have largely replaced the older huts which were destroyed in a recent disastrous fire.

Apart from Kowloon City sole jurisdiction in the New Territories was ceded to Britain for 99 years, and for that period those Chinese whose homes were there and who might be born there became British subjects. The convention provided that there should be no expropriation or expulsion of the inhabitants and that land required for public purposes should be bought at a fair price.

There is today a 56-mile circular road round the New Territories which offers a very pleasant afternoon's sightseeing. On

Round the NEW TERRITORIES





leaving Kowloon you may be stopped by a road-block and a number of police. They are on the look-out for things like arms, gold or opium. Off the main road there is a road leading to the Jubilee Reservoir, an impressive engineering work in the lovely scenery of the Shing Mun valley. Here is some of the quietest, most undisturbed country in the New Territories and it may be turned into a nature reserve. The reservoir holds 3,000 million gallons and is one of the highest in the Empire. Water is one of Hong Kong's biggest problems and perhaps the greatest importance of the New Territories to the Colony in recent years had been that its mountains provide, from a number of dams and catchments, so much of the water which the cities need during the four dry months of the year.

Tsun Wan is a place of considerable interest, for until recently it was a quiet rural village with paddy-fields all round. It has been chosen for planned urban development and already it has the busy, crowded air of a pioneer town, with some buildings half constructed, others completed, and a good deal of temporariness about the rest. There are several new factories, textile, silk, enamelware, and others, now in its vicinity. Near Tsun Wan there is one of Hong Kong's few historic sites. It has been variously described as the Grave of the Emperor's Aunt or the grave of Tang Hok, of the celebrated Tang clan of the New Territories, and his mother. It is on a stretch of hillside sloping to the sea and is marked by two granite pillars. The title of Emperor's Aunt was given to the princess Sung Tsung Kei, who, as we shall see, married a Tang in very romantic circumstances. She, however, was certainly buried elsewhere and the tradition that it is Tang Hok and his mother who lie at Tsun Wan is therefore more probable. A Taoist priest of the Sung dynasty thus describes the site:

Long extends its left limbs touching the heavenly bodies in the firmaments:
And grasps the green coat (Tsing I island) and dips it in the blue waters.

As you drive on to Yuen Long and look across Castle Peak Bay you can just make out the monastery of Tsing Shan clinging to the steep slopes of the mountain. It lies amid eucalyptus and fir trees, and if you like the scroll paintings of China you will find no more lovely prototype of them than the vision of mist drifting past the pine trees and monastery. It was built in 1910 but there has been a Buddhist centre there, so it is said, since

A.D. 500. There is a sacred grotto built by an official of the T'ang dynasty to shelter the remains of a dragon which had come up from the sea and died. The relic looked to me like the vertebra of a whale.

Yuen Long has the air of a gold-rush town—never quite finished and growing very haphazardly. It boasts a cinema and several restaurants but the streets are ill kept and dirty. There is a groundnut-oil factory owned by Mr. Tang Pak Kau, whom we shall meet again, which is a curious survival of primitive machinery. The presses are hollowed-out tree trunks with a hole through the centre. The cakes of ground and cooked peanuts are bound round with strips of bamboo, then packed closely into the hollowed trunk and wedged with heavy pointed wooden wedges driven into place by enormous hand-wielded mallets. More and more wedges are gradually added and the oil which is exuded pours through the hole in the bottom. It is said that 90 per cent of the oil can be extracted by this means.

Driving round the New Territories in this way you see many signs of the British troops: tents, lined-up lorries, and any number of military road signs. It brings home how little evident is the large garrison in the city. You will notice also on many a hillside large earthenware jars and may wonder what they contain and why they are there. It may surprise you to discover that each one contains human bones and that they are placed on the hills in these jars in the hope that some day the relatives can find the appropriate site for a permanent resting place. This is indeed not only a grave matter but a complicated one, as we shall see later.

Near to Fan Ling there is the curiously suburban looking village of On Lok Chun which consists of modern two-storey villas. They were built in 1935 by Chinese from America who were afraid to go to their homes in China because of the disturbances. From Fan Ling a road leads off to Sheung Shui district and Shek Wa Hui, which is the oldest market town in the New Territories. It is a very thriving market as it lies close to the frontier and is a smuggler's paradise.

Fan Ling is divided into three parts, an old quarter where the farmers live, a newer quarter where more prosperous and retired people live, and an entirely new market town called Luen Wa Hui. This was built as a rival to Shek Wa Hui, but when I

saw it, although there were shops open, there appeared to be practically no inhabitants. Indeed, it is all market but no town.

One of my lasting memories of Fan Ling is quite trivial, but I mention it as emphasizing the importance of getting out of the car if only for a brief moment and savouring personal contact with the Chinese earth and countryside. On our first visit to the New Territories after a number of crowded days in the city, which for all its great attraction is, undiluted, a weariness to the flesh, we stopped the car along a little branch road behind Fan Ling station and climbed up the hill behind to eat a picnic lunch. I had all the feelings of a dog released for a day in the country from a life in a London flat, though to be sure I did not go tearing and barking around but flung myself down on the turf in the spring sunshine. I lay there in the familiar atmosphere of a Chinese nature painting somehow become real and I felt a part of nature, as I am sure I was meant to do. Around me were little Christmas-tree pines all decorated with upright flower stems like candles; there was a sprig of bamboo growing from a crack on a rock face, there were arrow-shaped ferns and the bright green sword-blades of some bulb. The ground was sprinkled with tiny five-pointed stars in blue and there were cherry blossom coloured clusters of stars on a shrub. Around me floated a butterfly, new to me, chiselled in dragon forms, a large black and green swallowtail drifted past me and another was a passing impression in grey and blue. All quite trivial, but far too important to be missed. . . .

There is an infinite charm about the landscape of the New Territories. The hills which rise up swelling and looping from the startlingly beautiful fresh green of the paddy-fields take the forms of living dragons to the eyes of the peasants who dwell amongst them. Each row of houses, each temple with its curly dragon-crested roof in the soft grey brick villages is sited on the flanks of these hills in a way conformable and comfortable to the dragon. The life of the dragons, the life of the peasants, the cycle of the rice crops, all nature moves in one harmonious whole. Men and women in wide-brimmed hats follow the patient snorting buffaloes through the mud, or move steadily across the shining surface of the water-logged fields skilfully planting out the green tufts of paddy like bunches of tiny rapier

SHA TIN MONASTERY

blades. Man, beast, plant and landscape are bound together as it were in an immemorial partnership.

From Tai Po, which has an attractive market, the road winds down to the lovely Sha Tin valley where there is another famous monastery to which is attached a home for elderly women. By putting down a lump sum (according to their means) they are fed and housed for the remainder of their lives. It is rather like buying an annuity. They are completely free but they must be vegetarian. Sha Tin is popular for religious retreats and there are 16 religious centres in the hills round the valley. The Abbot of the monastery says it is the peace and security offered by the Colony that has attracted so many institutions of this kind. Right at the top of a hill is Tao Fong Shan, the Scandinavian Mission to Buddhists, where Buddhists anxious to know something about Christianity may stay and study. It has an interesting octagonal chapel designed like a Buddhist temple with a carved and lacquered altar, with scrolls hanging on the walls, but in place of a statue of Buddha there is a crucifix. Underneath is a crypt for the meditation of pilgrims.



Monastery amid pine trees on a mountain side (p. 56)

As you drive back on the last lap to Kowloon you can see away to your left a rock on a small hill which resembles a woman with a baby on her back. This is commonly known to the English as the Amah's Rock, but to the Chinese it is Mong Fu Kwai (Hoping Husband Returns). Legend has it that in the thirteenth century a lady came to Sha Tin with her husband. He belonged to the Emperor's bodyguard and was ordered away to Canton. Presently she received news that the force to which he belonged had been defeated but that happily he was alive and well. She had meanwhile borne him a son and to keep her child, herself and her mother-in-law she gathered firewood on the hillsides for sale. As she roamed the hills she would sing:

I went up the mountains, and my mind was sad,
My plait of hair was beautiful, and
I looked on the men that passed.
My heart is as firm as a rock by the river;
But the heart of my husband—
It is gone abroad upon the waters.

She would climb the hill and from its summit scan the horizon for her husband. One day she knew that he had come, but as he rushed up the hill to greet her she fainted, and when he had borne her home, she died. But at once the stone near which she had stood watching for her husband took on her form and there she stands to this day, faithfully watching and waiting.

CHAPTER SIX

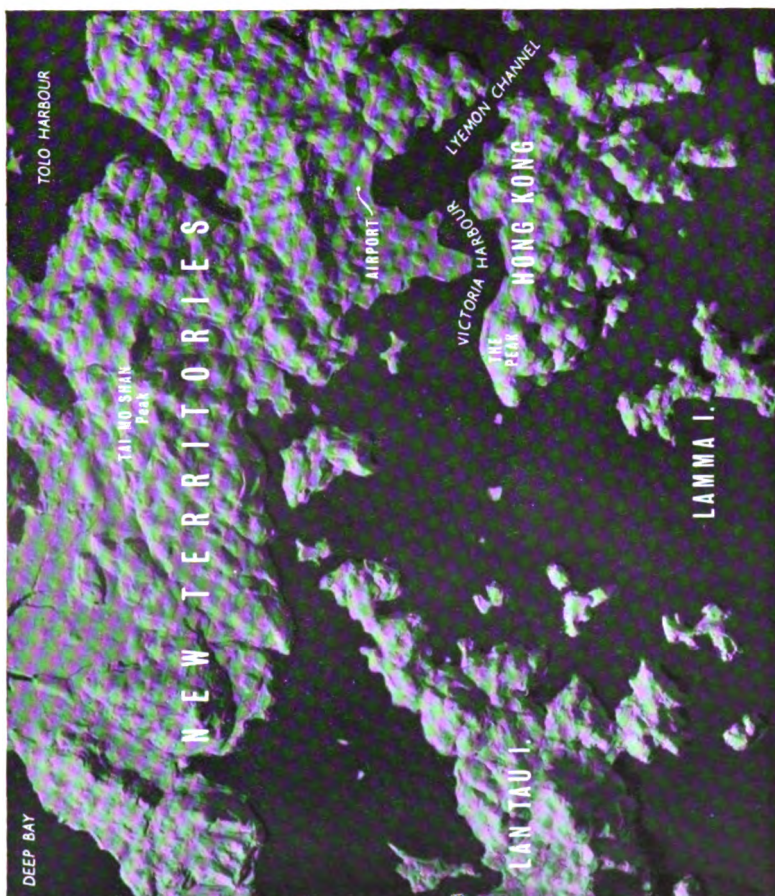
On Hong Kong's Frontier

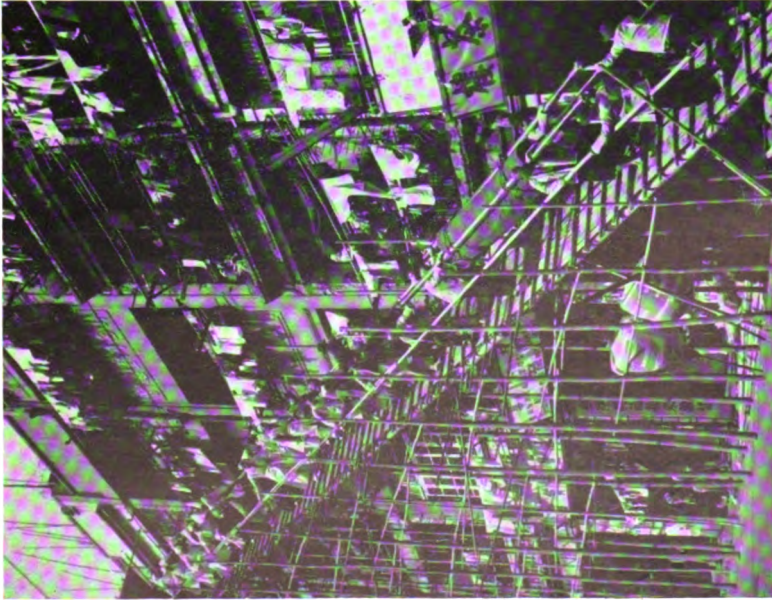
(i) Coming and Going

ONE OF THE MOST important things to be appreciated about the vast population of Hong Kong is that a very large proportion of it is not static. Some sense of the mass movement, the never-ending coming and going of the four million and more who enter and leave annually, can be obtained at the railway station next to the landing-stage of the Star Ferry at Kowloon, or at the quay at Hong Kong where the junk passengers and the passengers on the coastal steamers land.

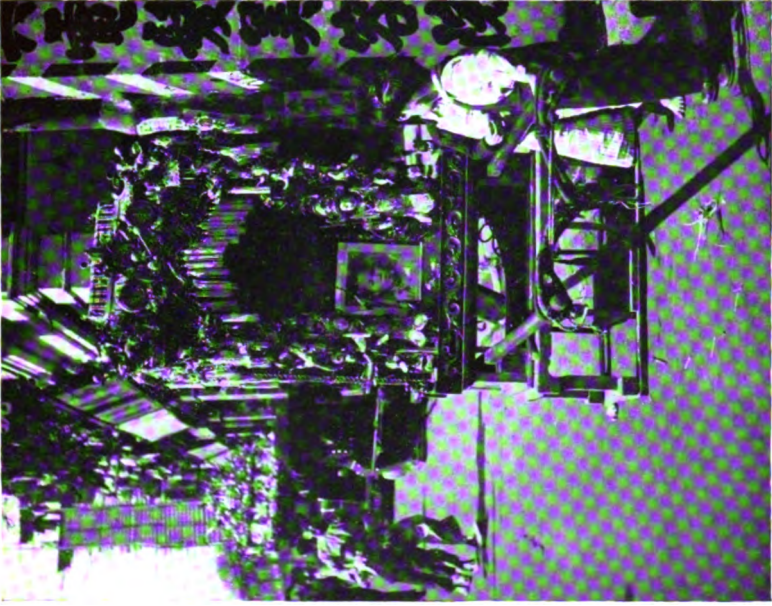
The Colony is both geographically and structurally part of the South China massif, the numerous islands having been detached from the mainland by various upheavals. There is a lack of coastal plains. The hills, some of which are of volcanic rock and some of granite, run straight down into the sea

PLATE V

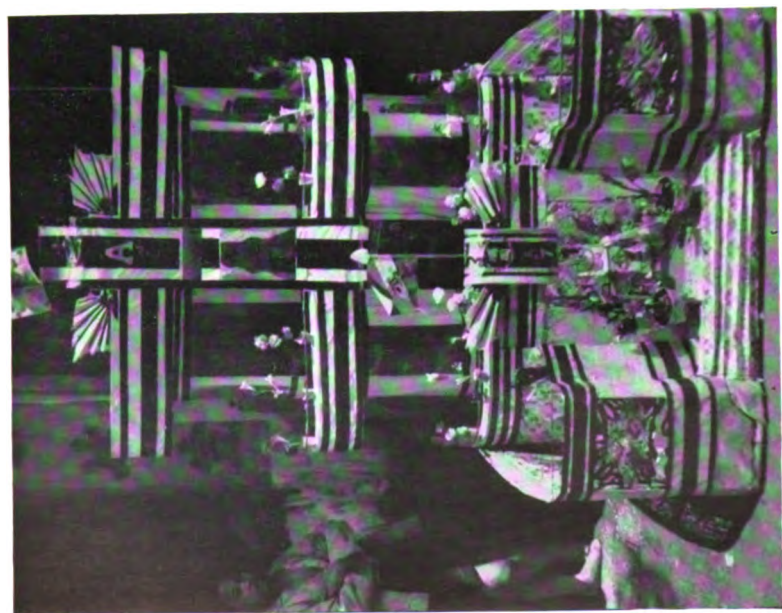




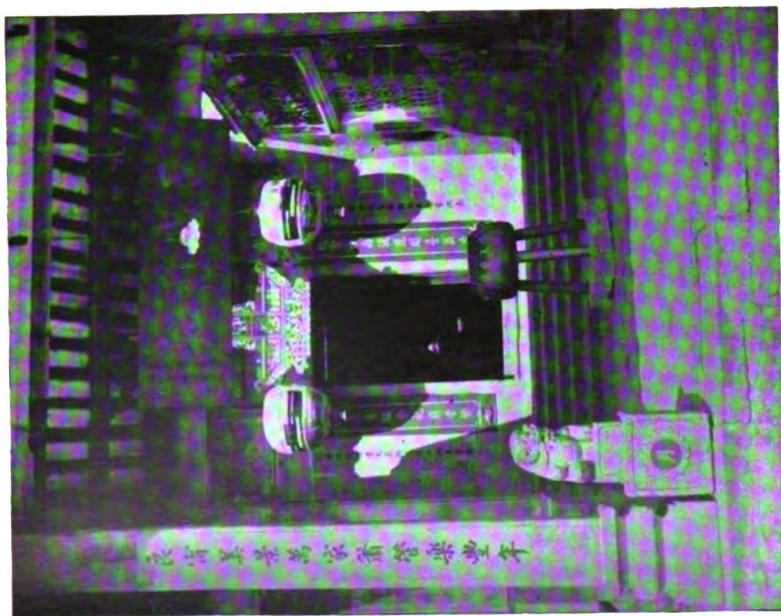
A corpse never leaves the house through the front door, but by a specially constructed ramp



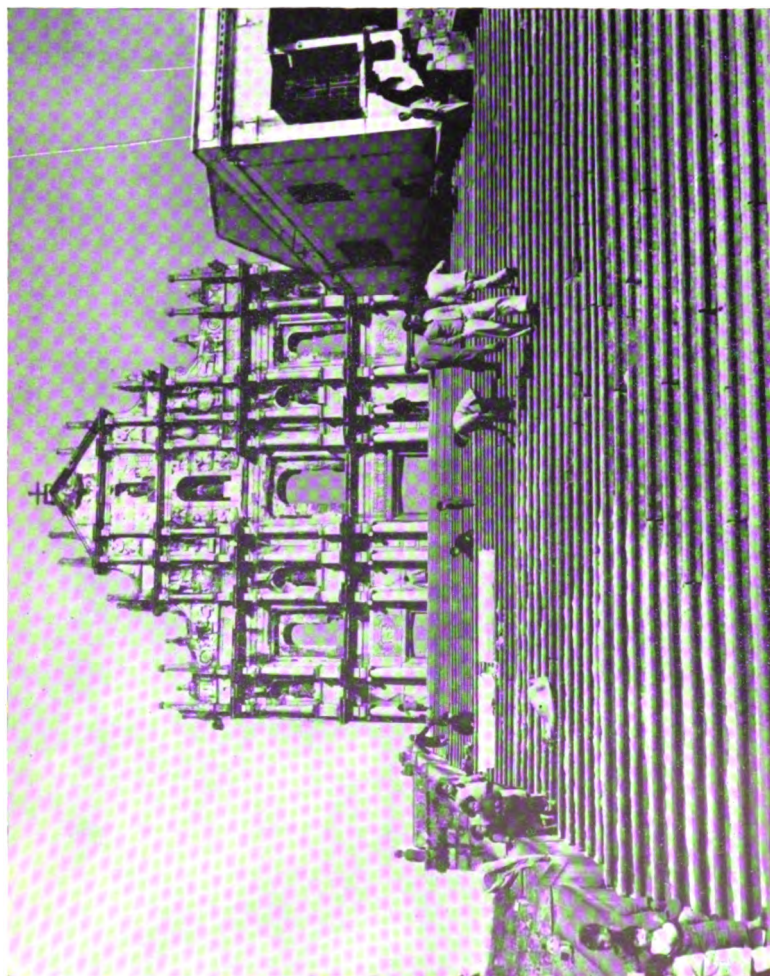
Funeral chair with a portrait of the deceased. The coffin follows behind



‘Your friends could buy you houses in paper and send them after you by burning them’ (p. 30)



The entrance to the temple of Hang Wong in Kowloon, a well-cared-for and ‘alive’ temple



‘The large and handsome church, milk white, with a splendid flight of stone steps’
(p. 16.) Façade of St. Paul’s Church, Macao, burnt down in 1835

Many trains a day come into the station from the frontier stop of Lo Wu. Behind the platform gates stand crowds anxiously peering through to see some expected or half-hoped-for refugee friend or relative arrive. In comes the crowded train; the passengers clinging to bundles and bags are off it in a twinkling and there are many reunions. One feels sorry for those who leave the iron railings disappointed; they will come again and again till perhaps one day they are rewarded.

In length the British section of the Kowloon-Canton Railway is one of the shortest colonial railways, only $22\frac{1}{4}$ miles long. Since the incursion of the Communists, through trains no longer run to Canton (there was a time when you could go by rail from Canton to London—Hong Kong is the only British colony linked by rail with London—and even now there are two coaches of the Golden Arrow service to Paris, which for some reason got brought to Hong Kong, left in this section of the railway), but in January 1950, 437,987 passengers travelled from Kowloon to Lo Wu, a number greater than on any other colonial railway except the Nigerian (with 1,903 miles). In the year ending April 1950, no fewer than 4,435,359 passengers travelled up and down between Lo Wu and Kowloon. There is no official communication between Canton and Hong Kong but apparently the railway administrations get on very well in off-record meetings. I saw one of the many Chinese generals who have had to find new jobs. He had come down to Hong Kong to fix time-tables. When a train from Canton arrives at Lo Wu, another also arrives from Kowloon.

I never saw a more astonishing sight at a railway station than that at Lo Wu, and it is here that the mass movement of Hong Kong's population is most spectacular. It was raining when we arrived and a train was just about to start back to Kowloon. It was jam-packed with humanity and two trucks were piled high with pigs, each pig in a bamboo basket. Only live pigs are allowed to be brought over the frontier, yet I am told only 70 per cent of those put on the train on our side reach Kowloon alive. The rest are suffocated, and as a great many must be suffocated on the journey down country on the Chinese side, the mortality is plainly very high. A huge mountain of pigs was left by the rail-side as the train pulled out. I was told there were about 400, but I should have thought there were more.

The train had no sooner gone out than another pulled in. Before it had come to a halt, men, women, children and luggage were hurtling from every window and exit, streaming as fast as they could for the suspension bridge over the Shum Chun River which marks the boundary between British and Chinese territory. Traffic to the left was the rule and it was directed for the most part by one burly and jovial British Inspector. How he kept his patience is a secret possessed only by British policemen. We moved at his invitation across the sleepers of the bridge, through which we could see the brown swirling waters of the flooded river. The British of course had fixed the further bank as the boundary, and if you look at a map of the Colony you will see we treated ourselves in a similarly generous way in all our water boundaries, with one curious exception. We stood, therefore, just short of the further bank and watched Chinese officials in uniform directing traffic from their train across to our side. One of these officials was a competent-looking Mongolian girl whose physiognomy reminded me very closely of the Russian soldiers guarding the road through the Russian Zone of Germany from Helmstedt to Berlin and making one think that Genghis Khan had come again.

We stood perched on these sleepers between the two opposing and quite irresistible streams. There are hundreds of Chinese who cross the frontier back and forth every day, smuggling something out of China or something back into it, and in the aggregate these activities swell Hong Kong's trade figures considerably. But most are refugees. Dripping couples of coolies carried at a trot on bamboo poles more and more pigs, which sat on their sterns in their cages rather like obscene caricatures of bloated black marketeers in sedan chairs. The Inspector said the average number of pigs arriving from Canton and Hunan Province was about 800 a day. The Hong Kong town slaughter-house alone deals with 1,500 to 2,000 pigs a day, but must be able to handle 3,000, which is the number slaughtered on a festival day. Dr. Fehily, Chairman of the Urban Council, told me he had asked from home and other countries for plans for a slaughter-house capable of dealing with 90,000 pigs a year. No slaughter-house in the world deals with this quantity and the home authorities did not believe the figures and sent plans for an *abattoir* capable of handling 9,000! Agricultural Department

figures show that the pigs slaughtered in Hong Kong Island and Kowloon amounted to no less than 505,246 for the year ended March 1950, and that cannot be the whole tale, for a good many in the New Territories are slaughtered in villages and private houses. Cattle consumed for the same period were 46,876, and sheep and goats 5,803. When you think of all the fish, vegetables and fruit consumed in Hong Kong you will imagine that most of the people at least must be pretty well fed. In pork alone it works out at about a pig to every four or five of the population in 1949-50.

As we watched those hundreds of passengers from Canton struggling and fighting in the rain to buy a ticket from the solitary window at the station, we could not help reflecting that to many of them this arrival in British territory represented not only the making of money and a better chance of mere survival, but also peace and security and freedom from oppression. Familiar as one was with the stories of European D.P.s, having seen them moving helplessly in Germany at the end of the war, China had seemed too far away for its fleeing millions to be more than a vague conception. But one week-end we had a German with us who had fled from Poles and Russians, losing her home in Prussia and landing at last in a solitary room at Munich, and a Chinese guest who told us how she had been brought up in a large manse—her grandfather was in the Methodist Church—and had had to fly from Nationalists, Japanese and Communists till at last she and her family—14 in all—arrived in the shelter of a small flat in Hong Kong. Many Germans are far too sorry for themselves, and when our Chinese friend had gone to bed the German remarked how good it had been for her to hear a story so similar to her own. All over Europe and all over China millions of homeless fellow creatures have been fleeing of recent years, and it is as good to think that many find a refuge in Hong Kong as it is that others do in the United Kingdom.

But the problem of handling them is no easy one. They go on pouring in from all sides. Hong Kong's services can handle about a million. When we left Hong Kong in May 1950 the population was the largest it had ever been, and had expanded at a terrifying rate from 600,000 when the Japanese occupation ended in 1945 to not far short of 2,500,000. Hong Kong has always believed in the open door, but at last it had to close it, at

least partially—for no closure can be effective in a colony with such frontiers. Since then, for one reason and another, the balance of departures has exceeded arrivals by 10,000 to 20,000 a week. Like a sponge Hong Kong draws in population and squeezes it out, and the hand that does the squeezing is China's. If conditions are good in China, people stay there, if they are uncomfortable they rush to Hong Kong.

(ii) Doubt and Uncertainty

At intervals down the centre of the main street of the village of Sha Tau Kok are set concrete pillars a couple of feet high which make the passage of wheeled traffic impossible. If a car could drive down it, its wheels on one side would be in British and on the other in Chinese territory. The Bamboo Curtain, invisible, but very much there, runs down the middle of the road.

While our companions watched anxiously for Communist policemen we shopped in China. It was the only chance we had of setting foot in Chinese territory, but the things we bought could equally well have been bought on the other side of the street; they were mostly either made in the villages of the New Territories or in the factories of Hong Kong: anything that was made on Chinese soil was equally obtainable on British. We might have been arrested. A few weeks earlier the same jovial police inspector whom we met at Lo Wu had been patrolling at Sha Tau Kok with some Chinese constables of the Hong Kong Police and, missing the boundary, had been arrested by Communist police. His own men succeeded in distracting their attention and he had skipped back to the shelter of the invisible line.

The British side of Sha Tau Kok is a place which a European can only visit with a permit. The Chinese, British subjects or not, are free to come and go and cross the frontier as they please. To one who has strong feelings on the subject of racial discrimination the other way, it was amusing to find that the business is not always one-sided. I also discovered that a European could not go into a shop and buy Chinese wines.

We walked to the end of the street and beyond came to a wooden bridge across a narrow stream. On the other side

patrolled an authentic Communist soldier or policeman. We persuaded the village head who was with us to ask him if we could take his photograph. Stepping across into China, he came back with the answer that we could photograph the bridge but not him. The soldier thereupon posed himself in the middle of the Chinese entrance to the bridge and we photographed the latter! Near by was a large enamel Union Jack. Down the centre of St. George's cross was painted in white Chinese characters (which of course are written vertically so they looked almost part of the flag), 'Down with the Imperialists'.

We walked back to the other end of the street and sat down in a café on the British side, which having electricity, absent on the Chinese side, could also offer iced drinks. Feeling particularly British, I chose orange squash rather than Coca-Cola. Just across the street, so I was told, one could have played fan-tan. Here it was illegal. Actually, just the other side of the boundary stone near the café, a Chinese pedlar squatted droning a continuous sing-song patter about his wares. We went to watch him. He had a stereoscope and a number of photographs. You could see the lot for a few cents. Some of them represented the Chinese Communist troops in their recent victorious sweep of Nationalist China, and there was one of the great blaze in old Kowloon City.

The burthen of the song was, so I gathered, 'See how the victorious troops of the People's Army have liberated China, and see how the wicked Imperialists burn cities!'

I wonder how many thought of how the merchant imperialists had provided the British side with cheap electricity and how they provided grants to the local village school which on the British side gaily flaunted a Communist flag. Still less, no doubt, were there thoughts of how the British had reduced infantile mortality from 617 a thousand in 1935 to 91.1 a thousand in 1948. Or of the care being given to the victims of the Kowloon fire and, despite almost superhuman difficulties, to the health and welfare of the millions who prefer Hong Kong to China. There might easily have been a loudspeaker saying some of these things on the British side of the boundary posts, but there wasn't. It was not altogether surprising to be told that the feeling on the British side of Sha Tau Kok acquiesced more in the Communist viewpoint than in the British. I have not much doubt that they liked

what they could get on the British side better than what they got on the other, but they were very literally sitting on the fence. They were Chinese by race and sentiment and had to have a careful eye to eventualities.

Sitting on the fence is not confined to Sha Tau Kok, however; it is one of the principal characteristics of most of the Chinese in Hong Kong. Even those born in the Colony who are British subjects by birth are also by Chinese law Chinese citizens, and one of Hong Kong's greatest peculiarities is that, save for a small minority, chiefly Portuguese and Eurasians, hardly any say of it: 'This is my own, my native land'. If they do, they do not mean that Hong Kong is British and so are they.

In the light of the manifest tremendous capital development which had taken place since the war, and which was still being planned, it seemed strange that one of the first questions people asked a newcomer was, would the British remain? The answer seemed obvious and was reinforced by the very evident presence of large numbers of British troops in the New Territories.

In spite of all this the immense activity of working and money-making, playing mahjong and eating large meals, by no means limited to three courses and five shillings, induced a feeling that the philosophy of Hong Kong at the moment was: Let us eat and drink and make money for we don't know what's going to happen tomorrow.

PART TWO

LIFE AND

LIVELIHOOD

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Dwellers in Tenements

LIVERPOOL with 860,000 inhabitants or Glasgow with 1,124,000 are great cities covering large areas, yet the cities of Hong Kong and Kowloon with populations of comparable size are in area quite small. One soon has no doubt that the vast majority of the people must live in appalling conditions, but nothing except actual visits can give an adequate idea of the realities of the situation.

Most of the Chinese population live in four-storeyed tenements. Many of them were built in the early days of the Colony when town planning was little practised even in Europe, and Hong Kong has no legislation to require the compulsory demolition of such premises. Those built later have scavenging lanes rendering the provision of proper bathrooms and latrines possible, but the older ones have no lanes and are built back-to-back.

In some ways conditions in this modern and wealthy tropical city of Hong Kong are worse than they were in England in 1840. The report of the Health of Towns Committee in that year spoke of single-storeyed small houses put up by speculative builders in Manchester. 'They are built back to back; without ventilation or drainage: and like a honeycomb every particle of space is occupied. Double rows of these houses form courts, with perhaps a pump at one end and a privy at the other, common to the occupants of about twenty homes.'

In Hong Kong these tenements are four storeys high, so that conditions are worse. It becomes understandable how human beings are packed at 2,000 and more to the acre. If there is one thing that saves disaster in Hong Kong, it is the labours of the Sanitary Department, but it is wrong that it should have to contend with such conditions.

The upper storeys of practically all the tenements are reached by narrow, dark stairs between two blank walls. They are always steep, the treads narrow, and the hand-rail often broken. They are also generally unswept and untidy. When you find the

actual flat, cubicle or bedspace in which a family lives clean and well kept, you wonder at first why passages and stairs are so dirty, and when you have found the reason you have part of the answer to Chinese character. The Chinese is an individualist. A favourite proverb is 'Sweep the snow from your own doorstep but don't bother about the ice on your neighbour's roof'. To a Chinese tenement dweller the stairs and the passages are no more than the street outside.

Led by Dr. Shaw, the deputy Director of Health Services, we went first to such a tenement in Lockhart Road in Wanchai. The first floor had been intended for a one-family flat, and as such, with two to three rooms and a wide verandah, would have been comfortable. There were present eight women, one old man, a youth and two babies, and they admitted to 16 living there. The rooms were all divided into cubicles and part of the verandah had, illegally, been boarded in. On the whole it was pretty well kept but one could see that some cubicle-owners were more particular than others. Its occupants were of the white-collar class and considering the overcrowding it was remarkably clean. It was untidy rather than dirty.

In the communal kitchen a woman was cooking an appetizing-looking lunch for five on an earthen stove. There was a flush toilet in good order. Houses with water-borne sanitation have to have their own well. A visit to the sanitary lane behind this block showed that the overworked sewer was blocked and the lane flooded. Sanitary men were sent for and later we saw them removing obstructions in conditions which had better be left undescribed.

Dr. Shaw then took us through a road so cluttered with pedlars and stalls that it would have been impossible to drive a car through it. Rubbish and muck were accumulating under the stalls and he kept ordering people to sweep up. Suddenly he halted. 'Look at that!' 'That' was a woman selling meat on a small table of packing-cases, a most heinous offence. Grasping her by the ear, he let loose a torrent of Chinese and had no sooner loosed her than she vanished in the crowd. There were a number of cooked-food stalls and all the way the doctor inspected licences and washing-up arrangements. Once he ordered a whole row of obstructions off the pavement. Half an hour later, when we repassed, they were back again.

TENEMENT CONDITIONS

This time Dr. Shaw chose an ancient wooden tenement for us to visit. The older type of building is always narrow because its width was regulated by the average length of the fir trees used as rafters. Each floor is long because of the Chinese preference for a shop with back shop on the ground floor. The ground floor was occupied by a young contractor who had turned the back shop into a godown for his gear and 30 coal coolies. It was dirty and very dark, for the only light and air came at second-hand through the front shop or from a grating high up in the back wall. Against one wall were piled the baskets and gear used for coaling ships, and on the other were fixed three tiers of six bunks each. Here 25 of the coolies sleep while the other five are housed in the cockloft over the shop. They get £7 10s. a month, from which they pay for their food, but their 'quarters' are free. Some of them were sleeping on the bunks wrapped in blankets and sacks. In the small kitchen at the far end a man was cooking his dinner. These men were all from China and had no families with them.

Whenever I see a steamer hand-coaled again I shall think of those pallid, exhausted faces which seemed to have T.B. written on them, lying in that dark cellar-like godown.

Steep and rickety stairs led to the first floor, where 28 were living in a flat that could have held about six reasonably. There were five or six cubicles along one side and double-tiered bunks on the other. Each cubicle or bunk represents 'home' to one or more people. At the back was a small dark communal kitchen with a tap and bucket for washing, and a covered wooden bucket for latrine for all these people. (There are good public latrines and baths near by.) Another steep flight took us to the top floor, where the arrangements were the same and where 32 people lived. Most of them were of course out.

Under the one window in the front a boy of about 15 sat on a stool. Before him, laid out on a packing-case top on another stool, were exercise books and a book on mathematics. He went to a night school, the only school he could get into, did odd jobs to earn money and was going to be an engineer. The boy's mother joined us, a sad-looking, careworn, middle-aged woman. The father was a mason earning 3s. 9d. a day. Five women, two carrying babies, and three young children crowded round us as we sat down to talk, and the boy freed the two stools and betook

himself and his books to a bedspace or bunk to continue his work. I felt pretty confident he *would* be an engineer. His and his parents' home was one wooden bunk, covered with a clean coloured Chinese straw mat and the wall behind it neatly papered with cheerful wallpaper. On the wall was a little red-papered shrine to the God of the Land. On that bunk, say six feet by four, father, mother and son slept. This was not the most that can get on to a bunk. I heard of one with a husband, wife, concubine, and three children.

Outside the window on treble-banked bamboo poles was the washing of all the inmates. In the kitchen at the back a woman was preparing fish on one of the chatties—the clay stoves used for cooking all over the East—and the red shrine of the Kitchen God brightened its gloom. It was surprising that there was no unpleasant smell in these quarters.

Never in my life, in Africa, in Europe, in Arabia, had I seen slums worse than this, but never had I met slum-dwellers who looked so clean and tidy, so cheerful and welcoming, in such conditions. The Chinese seem able to rise above the drabest surroundings.

Some time later Mr. U Tat Chee, the famous 'Ginger King' of Hong Kong, a man of great kindness and humanity much interested in social work, took us with two of the women workers from his ginger factory to see their homes in Kowloon. Ah Kan lived in Shantung Street. She was not married but, in partnership with a woman friend, was first tenant of a flat. The two shared a double bed on the verandah, letting off the rest of the flat to six families totalling 28 people. The rent was controlled and they got £1 17s. a month for each cubicle and £1 for a bedspace. One of these was home for a couple, their three children and grandmother; another was home for a widow and her small daughter, her two brothers and her mother. All the tenants were extremely cheerful and entertained us with cups of China tea, making jokes about the 'luxury' in which they lived. Many were busy working as they talked. One sat cross-legged on her bunk unpicking rags for cotton waste for which she was paid 7d. a pound. She said it took her four or five days of spare time unravelling to do a pound.

Most of the husbands and some of the women were factory workers or street hawkers, and we were told there is great

competition for the small communal kitchen when they return from work. Firewood is kept in the bedspaces as it is an expensive commodity. The kitchen is also the bathroom and latrine—a lidded bucket behind the door.

The other factory worker, Ah Lan, took us to Canton Street, where she and her husband share a shelf for £1 is. a month. She was well dressed in pale blue cotton pyjamas and her face literally lit up when she smiled, for she had a mouthful of flashing gold teeth. Quite a lot of money is banked in mouths in Hong Kong, and indeed most people put their money into gold and ornaments rather than into banks. Hong Kong must be one of the very few colonies where there is not a Government Post Office savings bank.

I noticed that our hostess had a little oil lamp above the bed-space although there was electric light in the flat. She explained it was an economy as the oil cost less than globes. There was a great litter of clothes, papers, powder, and the miscellaneous personal things we all have round us. Outside the window the washing as usual hung on bamboo poles, and one of the other tenants was combing out her long black hair which she had just washed in a bucket. When you live in conditions like this you treat those operations naturally and I saw more long tresses being washed in Hong Kong than I had ever seen before.

The passage-way was cluttered with children and others were asleep on shelves, flopped down in all sorts of attitudes. There were no children going to school in this tenement but both our guides went to a night school run by Mr. U for his adult factory workers. I had thought there were only women and children in the flat at that hour, but passing a cubicle on the way to the kitchen I saw a street hawker lying in a sleep of utter exhaustion across his bunk. Near by he had put down his tray of apples and oranges with their price neatly labelled in red in English and Chinese.

The flat might have held three families comfortably but it had nine. No one had thought of counting how many persons this represented and a guess at 26 was made. I heard later of such a tenement floor with no fewer than 23 families in it. These conditions, it must be remembered, are those in which *most* of the working-class people of the Colony live. Some surveys have been made: one, covering 1,000 families, showed 687 of them

living in one room and 120 on a bedspace. Seventy-four had a whole flat, 30 a hut and 8 a house. The remainder were 8 squatters, 13 on sampans and junks, 23 verandahs, 23 cocklofts, and one on a roof.

Since such surveys deal only with families they obscure the number of individuals involved. They consist of children of all ages up to about 18: the elder ones largely work in factories, the lucky ones among the younger go to school. The mothers, for the most part, stay at home with the babies and prepare meals. We shall meet these folk, parents and young people, again, in the factories, at schools and in clubs, but what we have seen is enough to tell us why it is that trams, buses and ferries carry so many millions a year. Many feed well. Clustered round these tenements are endless restaurants, cooked-food stalls and teashops. Some are better kept than others but on the whole the standard is pretty good and the food is generally appetizing. And good and appetizing food is cooked even in those frightful tenement kitchens. Chinese spend much of their income on food and will only eat freshly-killed meat or freshly-pulled vegetables. They always market twice a day, buying the food for their mid-day meal in the morning and for their evening meal in the afternoon. You never see wilted vegetables, tired-looking meat or fish in Hong Kong markets.

Men and women of the working classes are adequately but not extravagantly dressed. In general the men wear cotton coats with high collars and loose trousers, the women cotton high-necked pyjamas with loose trousers and sleeves. Blue is the most popular colour, though a kind of shiny black is often worn by those who come from Canton. For festive occasions the girls take to high-necked dresses with slit sides and the men go into a Western type suit or into a Chinese long gown. Women never wear hats, except the straw hats common among coolies, peasants and boatwomen. Men wear these too, but they also sport caps and homburgs made of waterproof material in rainy weather. Practically all the young women have 'permed' heads, except among the very poor and the boatwomen. Factory girls said it cost them \$7 for a 'perm'—the more expensive kind is \$20.

As will be seen later, much is being done in trying to improve the lot of these tenement dwellers, and I was interested in some

SOME TYPICAL CASES

notes made by student almoners who were house-visiting, because they give the reactions of other Chinese to such conditions:

'In one flat the mother was at work; her young son was all alone, and he had to prepare the meals for his mother and sister. The latter, a girl of 15, could do no work as she was mentally defective.' The boy's elder brother had recently arrived from China and had through some personal favour got the boy into a school in the New Territories. Now he was home for the winter vacation, but he was doubtful if he could go back the following term as the particular friend would no longer be there. 'There ends', reported the visitor, 'the boy's hope of further education.'

There was the mother who shared a cockloft 'as big as an ordinary camp bed' with her unemployed husband and two children. Her son who had been attending school had to leave in order to earn two meals by working in his uncle's shop.

The Ho family live in Kowloon City. They pay \$10 a month for a corner in the kitchen-bathroom of a flat. They have practically no furniture except a bed. 'The relationship', goes on the report, 'between the father and the mother is very good. The father, 30 years old, is a coolie helping with building. His income is 2s. 6d. a day, but when it rains there is no work and he is unable to earn anything. He loves his wife and baby very much. The mother, 28 years old, is an honest and healthy woman. She keeps her baby quite clean.'

And finally an inquiry into a T.B. case of a child then in a sanatorium. The parents occupy one of three bunks under a stairway. 'It seems too narrow a space for two people; I wonder where the child is going to sleep when he is discharged. There are four cubicles besides. Apparently seven families live here with another family out on the verandah. It is positively overcrowded. The interior is dim and stuffy. Most conducive to breeding T.B. The inmates appeared unconcerned. This passiveness is something inevitable, I think. One is happy so long as one has a roof over one's head nowadays.'

CHAPTER EIGHT

Squatters

ON ALMOST any hillside behind the cities of Hong Kong and Kowloon where the gradient is sufficiently short of the perpendicular to enable a hut to perch, on bombed sites, or on any site momentarily not in use, are to be found squatter settlements. They are in every sense, except the legal, villages and small towns. Legally they just do not exist, but it is competently estimated that at least one-tenth of the urban population are living as squatters. This means 200,000 people! And there is very little to be done about it except tacitly recognize their existence and do what is possible to control them in the interests of health and order. People must have shelter and must be able to find a living, and such is the character of the Chinese that if those conditions are fulfilled they are little trouble.

Squatter colonies broke out in Hong Kong after the war and spread like a rash. People found rents so high and accommodation so difficult to obtain that they bought or collected a sufficiency of waste timber and old tins and built themselves huts. Every available open space and back lane was used, and when those were exhausted whole villages appeared on the roofs of tenements, but roof squatters have probably now for the most part been eliminated.

They are not just collections of hovels occupied by destitute refugees. There are quite wealthy squatters with large houses (but no regular sanitation). There are squatter factories, large and small, squatter cinema studios, squatter restaurants, squatter shops, even squatter opium dens, gambling dens and brothels. In one village there is even a squatter fire brigade and a squatter police force. You have to hand it to these people!

We paid our first visit to a squatter village on the hill behind Causeway Bay with the tempestuous Dr. Shaw, to whom squatter piggeries are as a rag to a good-tempered bull. Dr. Shaw roared at squatters all the way of a hot and tiring climb up the hillside. One saw agitated faces on all sides. Each had a look of guilt. Whether it was because they had uneasy consciences, or because they expected they had done something

wrong but weren't sure what it was, or just because they were illegal as squatters anyhow, I don't know, but they did not take his good-tempered roaring amiss, in fact they seemed to enjoy it, and I guessed from the way the children crowded round him that he was a pretty popular caller even if he did cause some uneasy moments.

As we went up Shaw searched out piggeries. In the course of it we found other things of interest. The huts were, generally speaking, all of one-inch rough sawn boards, some of them no more than a few feet square, others large and divided into cubicles. I came to the conclusion I would far rather live in a squatter's hut in the fresh air than in a stuffy, fetid, dark tenement cubicle, though, I am told, it is terrible in the rain, with the leaking and the torrents tumbling down the mountain side. There was a great concrete nullah or storm-drain down the valley. Shaw said it had been blocked with every sort of nuisance from nightsoil to garbage and had needed a hundred coolies to clean it. The squatters had their own 'council of village representatives', or Kai Fong, but they did not keep the place clean themselves. This no community seems to do. Huts were set up anyhow with no sort of planning, some of them on stilts with wooden bridges, but the interiors all seemed nice and clean, and even homelike with their simple furniture, curtains and photographs.

In two rooms of one wooden hut we found an electric torch factory in full swing. The back room had a furnace roaring away. Not being insanitary it didn't worry the doctor, but I expect it would have given a fire brigade fits. Shaw had disappeared over a bridge and up a side alley on a pig hunt, and I was watching a woman washing her hair in a huge tub in a laundry when the usual roar followed by an excited stampede of running feet made me think he had found his quarry in a big way. I went off in the direction of all the rumpus and found him calling to us to come and see an opium den. There were 14 wide divans in the place, each of plain wood covered with Chinese mats. On them were Chinese porcelain pillows and a little lamp with flame steadily burning under a wide glass chimney. The opium was in tiny pillboxes, a black paste. Only one opium pipe had been forgotten in the wild rush through the windows. It seemed very still inside with the lamps burning so steadily and a

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queer thick smell in the air. When we came out everybody was minding his own business very assiduously. I noticed some amused smiles, but opium den! Oh no. No one had dreamed there was such a thing there.

At last, higher up the mountain, Shaw ran a piggery to earth, tracing it by big wooden tubs of swill. I must say I thought the whole place and the pigs looked very clean and healthy. The torrent of Chinese which fell from his lips meant, I was told, that if they didn't remove them at once the Governor, the Commissioner of Police, the Admiral, the General and the R.A.F. would be up that afternoon to clear them all out!

Led back down the hill by the triumphant doctor, we were joined by dozens of cheering children who gave us a good send-off as we drove away in his car.

On another afternoon we went with Dr. Graham Cumming, formerly a missionary doctor, with a long family tradition of mission work in China and now Senior Health Officer, to see more squatters on the Kowloon side. Looking down from the Tai Po road, we saw below us a vast area covered with some 5,000 huts sheltering perhaps five times as many people. Quite a decent-sized town in fact, equal to the whole civilian population of Gibraltar—or to the city of Canterbury.

We dropped in on a young woman feeding her baby with a spoon and a cup of water in a nice new hut about 9 ft. by 8 ft. She invited us to sit with her on the double-plank bed which took up most of the right side of the hut. It had a mosquito-net and there was a good leather suitcase and clothes neatly stacked on a couple of shelves. Facing the door was a desk and alongside that wall a small and narrow bench. Her young husband came in to join us. His neck was curiously circled by vertical red streaks about half an inch apart—blood blisters plucked to cause relief from headache. He brought his father from across the road to tell the family story.

Yee Shing Lam was a man of forty-six, just as friendly as his son Yee Ah Wan and his daughter-in-law Chan Ah Tai. Chinese seem to me easy to talk to on short acquaintance. If we had asked Arabs or Africans as much as we asked them we would have had evasive answers and been strongly suspected of having designs for taxing them, annexing their property, and so on.

Yee Shing Lam said he had been in Hong Kong for three

years and had come from Hai Fong, which he left because of a bad harvest. Having done fairly well first in a job and then with his own retail grocer's shop, he sent for the rest of his family and Ah Wan now helps him in the shop. They make about £5 a month and the father has also a share in the communal paddy-fields at their home village in Hai Fong which brings him in four piculs of rice a year. 'We just manage to balance our budget', said Ah Wan, 'and we have no intention of going back to China.'

Although Chan Ah Tai said she was illiterate and only knew domestic work and how to look after her baby daughter, she was running a barber's shop in the next-door and larger compartment of the hut. They had raised £63 to build the hut with a casual labour contractor. We went to have a look at it. It is curious how the conventional red, white and blue sign of a barber has spread here. Outside the expensive barbers' shops there is always an electrically revolved pole: here the door frame was painted in transverse bands. It cost from £6 to £12 to fit up the shop with barbers' chairs, shelves, mirrors, combs, scissors, curling-irons, etc., and Ah Tai's employee takes 15 per cent of the earnings. You can have a haircut *and* a shave for 9d. If you want to go the whole hog and have a shampoo and hair-curling as well it will only cost you about 4d. more. Quite a lot of young Chinese males like having their hair waved! This sort of haircut and shave at 9d. may sound expensive, but the high-class barber shops charge anything from 3s. 2d. to 7s. 6d. for a haircut alone!

We crossed the road to look at Shing Lam's squatter shop. He had no licence for it (he did not believe in contacts with Government departments, police, and so on) and sold many essential things, needles, brown country sugar, beans, dried fish, cakes, matches, soap, oil, and—inevitably—bottled orange squash and Coca-Cola.

This tale of squatter Shing Lam and his family is entirely typical. If it is not failure of crops which causes them to leave China, it is conscription or the failure of village economy. If an emigrant finds he can get on, he brings his family. The family gets on and their neighbours hear about it and then they come. It happens that thus whole villages transplant themselves piecemeal to Hong Kong!

Screening of squatter colonies has revealed that the vast majority of squatters are not natives of Hong Kong. Very few

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of the men are unemployed. Surveys in two colonies revealed only 2 per cent, but less than 20 per cent—licensed hawkers, monthly-paid workers or Government servants—were in regular employment. Sixty-nine per cent of the women had only domestic duties and only 2 per cent were licensed hawkers or in regular employment. Less than a tenth of the children went to school but only 2 per cent worked as casual labourers or unlicensed hawkers.

On the whole, children, whether in tenements or squatter colonies, appear to be well fed and lively. An examination of 1,252 families showed that the general well-being of 2 per cent of the infants was very satisfactory, 14 per cent satisfactory, 38 per cent very fair, 28 per cent fair, and only 14 per cent and 4 per cent poor and very poor. These percentages of course reflect not only the Chinese attention to good food but to their marked care for their children. It is only when conditions are desperate that Chinese sell or part with their children and this is not a peculiarity of the race. I remember how starving Arabs abandoned their children in famine times and I am told it is a regular feature of famines.

CHAPTER NINE

Life in the Cities

AFTER WHAT we have seen of the manner of living of the tenement dwellers and squatters it will be appreciated that not many of the Chinese in Hong Kong have a home life in the way in which we understand it. With us home is an instinct; whether the things which really make a home, love, tranquillity of mind, domestic happiness, reasonable comfort, security for family, and the rest, are there or not, we call the place we live in home. A home is what we expect, and whatever its shortcomings a home we usually manage to have. We are idealists. If a Chinese has all those things which mean home in our sense, and if indeed they are what he wants, I have no doubt he is as capable of appreciating them as you or I. I know some happy Chinese homes and you can find them in Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth*

and other stories. There is a delightful picture of one in Norah Waln's *House of Exile*. But I do not think the Chinese necessarily looks for these things or expects them. He takes things as they are, wanting only what is within his reach, and therefore more often than not, and especially in the cities, has no home. He is a realist.

There are many in Hong Kong who have not even a tenement or a squatter hut in which to live. Thousands sleep where they work and any little shack or lean-to shelter will be found to be the only home of some family. Anything that provides cover will be pressed into service in this way. In tropical countries there is generally no particular hardship in having to sleep outside and a very simple construction can house a family quite well. If they have a little bit of ground much of the problem of living is solved: vegetables grow easily and a few chickens can grub about for a living without costing anything for their upkeep. As a Sikh policeman born in Hong Kong and now in Penang said to me: 'Malaya is a good country for the poor man. He can live in a hut, he can grow his food, it is warm and he has not to bother much about clothes. Hong Kong is a good country for the rich man. A poor man has to spend too much on clothes and food and rent.'

Shelter and warm clothing are necessary in Hong Kong's climate, but none the less in many a street sleepers are to be found in large numbers any night. They lie on the pavements wrapped in straw mats and sacks, and sometimes they die there. Their bodies are removed by the sanitary men on their morning rounds.

Such is the nature of the housing problem for the bulk of Hong Kong's population, but there can be no more than a comparatively few thousands who can be regarded as being free of housing problems. The white-collar classes up to quite a high level of income are often seriously overcrowded and living in flats of sub-standard character in considerable discomfort. Pre-war flats are rent-controlled but they change hands only with the payment of large sums as key money. Modern flats have very high rentals and the key money is also high. Key money for a flat or office ranges from between £625 and £2,500.]

I was often told by Chinese friends that it is not the custom of the ordinary city-dweller to entertain his friends at home. It is rare for anyone save close relations or great intimates to be invited to the place in which his friend lives with his wife and

family. The Chinese does his general entertaining at the numerous restaurants or at clubs: of the latter the West Point clubs are a most distinctively traditional Chinese institution. Business men's clubs abound in Central Hong Kong. They are Chinese, but they are also Western. Their necessity arises from the Chinese habit of doing most of their important business out of their offices. They serve the purpose which the city coffee-house such as Lloyd's served in Queen Anne's days and later. Trevelyan quotes the 'Wealthy Shopkeeper's' day as follows: rise at 5; counting-house till 8; then breakfast on toast and Cheshire cheese; in his shop for two hours, then a neighbouring coffee-house for news; shop again, till dinner at home (over the shop) at 12 on a 'thundering joint'; 1 o'clock on 'change; 3 Lloyd's coffee-house for business; shop again for an hour; then another coffee-house (not Lloyd's) for recreation, followed by 'sack shop' to drink with acquaintances, till home for a 'light supper' and so to bed, 'before Bow Bell rings nine'.

The difference between that and a Chinese business man's day in Hong Kong is that the 'wealthy shopkeeper' was living over his shop with his family and that the wealthy business man in Hong Kong does not do so. This difference largely accounts for the sing-song girl to be found in the West Point club. These clubs would be disappearing faster than they are if the Chinese set less importance on face and more of them could have comfortable homes. Tradition and overcrowding slow up the change-over. The clue, I think, lies in the way in which different cultures have adjusted the relations between the sexes. It was not until I found myself separated entirely from my family and the normal social relations of the Western culture for months at a time in the interior of Arabia that this dawned upon me. There I lived in a world which was for me entirely masculine. Femininity of one's own social level walked the streets muffled and shrouded in shapeless clothes of black and blue, trailing in the dust. In the houses in which I lived so long they were never seen, much less spoken to. After lunch the men retired to their harems till tea-time and after dinner between 9 and 10 the day ended with a similar withdrawal. Without noticing it, we in the West depend a great deal on the mixed society we enjoy apart from our families. The Arab, secluding the sexes, depends on polygamy. It was common for a man with only one wife to

marry another simply to be able to talk to her. The classic and tragic case is that of Jaafar the Barmecide whom Harun al Rashid married to his sister for no other reason than that he, Harun, could then talk to them together.

In China, though the cleavage between the sexes is less severe, there was till recently little social mixing. At a dinner party the men sat in one room and the women in another. We were often at parties where the women sat at other tables, or, if there was only one table, the sexes would be divided. The Chinese answer was not only the concubine—she was a wife, and a wife had not the function of entertaining her husband's guests. Appreciating the male need for female society at the end of a day's work, they invented the sing-song girl whose duty is to entertain.

With only two visits with different hosts to West Point clubs I can pretend to no exhaustive acquaintance with them. Emily Hahn has talked about them in *Miss Jill*, a book which I found extremely interesting but which both Europeans and Chinese in Hong Kong thought over-painted. There are eight of these clubs surviving, each having not more than a dozen members who share the monthly expenses of the club amongst them. There is thus no club fund, no subscriptions, no payments for meals or drinks, and the usual cost to each member is about £12. Any special entertainment such as a dinner party given by one of the members he generally pays for himself. The club's premises are usually on one floor, really one long room with a kitchen and lavatory at the back. The street has the appearance of an ordinary shop-residential quarter and there are shops on the ground floor, with dark and narrow stairs leading to the upper storeys. A knock at the front door of the club results in the opening of a peephole, followed by the opening of the door by one of the club amahs, for the servants in these clubs are generally females. The long, narrow club-room is comfortably furnished, though not luxuriously, and includes card-tables.

The members of such a club have as a rule a community of interests and most of them are business men. They probably know more about each other than they do about people who do not belong to their little circle. Five nights a week, including perhaps two specified nights when it is a point of honour to turn up, unless something quite unavoidable prevents it, they are

together in conditions of greater intimacy than they are anywhere else except among their own families. Amongst us members of a mess are in much the same position, but it is less accentuated because the Chinese are normally reserved and ceremonious, even to those they know well. Members of these clubs use nicknames and really 'let their hair down'. To these clubs they invite close friends and probably more business is done in them than in the offices. I think there is a greater feeling of trust in such surroundings.

I went one night as a guest of a friend who spoke English as well as I did and who had travelled extensively. There were a number of other members and guests present whom I had met in more ceremonious surroundings and I was much struck by the atmosphere of intimacy. A Chinese never loses his good manners, and at the same time he gives a great degree of friendliness even on fairly formal occasions, which quickly makes you feel at home. Now, however, I felt as though they had said 'We take you on trust, take us as we are: there are no barriers between us', and by the time the evening was out I felt I had known these chaps for years.

My friend explained the sing-song girl and her job. She is primarily a paid entertainer. It is her job to provide that light feminine touch which is, as I say, needed by most masculine humanity. A man who invites his friends to dinner at the club may engage one or more sing-song girls to entertain them. They talk amusingly and after dinner they may play the Chinese piano and sing. Often, but by no means invariably, they are prostitutes, but this is, so to speak, a separate function. Clever sing-song girls are very likely not to be prostitutes.

Before the war a girl was paid a dollar for a 'call'. She might have a number of calls in an evening: when she had booked them she would go round and spend anything from ten minutes to half an hour with each 'caller'. A certain amount of talk and a song comprised the dollar's worth. In the course of these calls she might be engaged to come back again later. There were many more of these clubs then, and many more sing-song girls. I was told that there are only about twenty genuine sing-song girls surviving and they seem to have a hard life. My friend said that 'Lady Somebody or other, I can't remember her name' had come to Hong Kong and expressed her horror and surprise

at hearing about the sing-song girls, and had made such a to-do that the tolerance extended to them was withdrawn. They had therefore become the subject of persecution and had to earn at least £25 a month in order to pay the excessive 'squeeze', perhaps £15, demanded of them. Most of the 'squeeze' would go to a Triad Society which would protect the girl against ill treatment by any of her clients, for she could have no other remedy if, for instance, they made demands on her which she was not prepared to meet, or failed to pay her dues. She might have to pay 'squeeze' to some policeman if she were a prostitute. Her rent would probably cost her £10 and a servant was necessary as a measure of respectability, to answer the telephone and so on, and she would cost £3. Apart from this, she had to be well dressed, and clothes and cosmetics cost a lot. So a 'call' now costs 12s. 6d.

There was some discussion amongst three of those present as to which sing-song girl they should summon. One, I remember, objected to the 'sour face' of a girl whose name was suggested. In due course the matter was settled and the club servant went off to make the call. We had almost finished dinner when the chosen one appeared, a slim, pretty child in a pale blue flowered silk dress, neatly coiffed hair and delicately rouged cheeks. She sat demurely on the sofa while we finished the meal, responding pleasantly to the remarks made to her from the table. After dinner as she talked, without giggles or levity, to some of the men I watched her, and my friend asked me how old I thought she was. It is never easy to judge the age of Chinese and as I usually under-estimate I guessed 26.

'Lord, no,' he said, 'she's about 18. She started on this two years ago. I think she was bought by someone and brought up to the job.'

Asked to play, she picked up the 'piano', a semicircular frame with wires stretched on it, arranged it on a small table, and began lightly to tap the strings with two padded hammers. I moved over to watch her as the light melody developed. Her name, I learnt, was Mai Yun—Beautiful Glamour. Now I could see how youthful she was. She carried her small head well on her slender neck, her face, usually almost expressionless, lit up with a fleeting smile when she was spoken to. She was perfectly self-possessed. She sang. Not at all well, as I suspect she knew, but it was unaffected and natural and it was her best.

As I watched Mai Yun, I thought of the struggle she must have to keep herself going, but I wondered if she would have understood if one had pitied her. She did not seem to me the shameless creature which 'Lady So-and-so' apparently thought her kind to be. She was honest and hard-working according to her lights and the way in which she had been brought up. She met a need and had her place in a social system. What more could anyone do? Besides, if this had not happened to her, she might have been much worse off, even if she were alive at all. Millions in China live in extremes of poverty or die of starvation and it will be long before every child even in Hong Kong gets a fair chance of a decent life. I wished I could have talked to her. When she finished her song, she said good-night and slipped away to her next call. She left with me a remembrance of a distinct little personality and I respected her personality.

Visitors now came into the club from neighbouring clubs, some of them bringing sing-song girls with them. Amongst the newcomers was a general to whom Chiang Kai-shek had once been chief of staff. He had two sing-song girls with him and introduced a note of boisterous hilarity into the proceedings. By this time most of the party had settled down to cards, but I still sat talking of endless things to two friends. The general was restless and leaped about between his two girls on the sofa and the card players, giving the former slaps and tickles and the latter a great deal of noisy advice.

My host suggested we pay a call on a mutual friend in another club which I had visited before. But the mutual friend was not visible. After finishing our drinks we withdrew. 'Very Chinese', said my Chinese host. 'He knows quite well you are here and he knows that you know he is here. But you have only met him on formal occasions as one of the big men of the Colony and face won't let him openly acknowledge to a foreigner in your position that he comes to a West Point club. He's hiding in the lavatory or the pantry.'

My host and another friend walked along to the cabaret at the Kam Lung Restaurant, where I had had that hilarious evening with the Tung Wah directors. Equipped with a couple of cabaret girls we danced and drank tea. These girls had come from Shanghai, from where dozens had migrated to Hong Kong since the arrival of the Communists, who announced their

intention of turning nuns, cabaret girls and so on to 'productive work'.

We ended our evening at the Ritz, Hong Kong's most expensive night club, six miles away from West Point at North Point, and we took one of our dancing partners with us. It was all soft lights and draperies, with a Filipino dance band dressed in dove-coloured suits and co-respondent shoes, with sleek heads and side-whiskers. Tropic nights and coloured lights and fountains and all the rest made it all very RO-mantic. There seemed to be few Europeans there. It is far too expensive: but I should find crooning and swing expensive whatever you paid for them.

'Club' is a word which covers all sorts of associations and the great variety of clubs there are in Hong Kong illustrates the fact and reflects the wide diversity of social life and interests. There are no less than 106 clubs, societies and associations listed in Hong Kong's Directory, and there are a great many more, such as the business men's clubs, night clubs and West Point clubs, which are not listed. Those in the Directory vary from such solid and secure social clubs of assured standing as the Hong Kong Club, the Club Lusitano and the Chinese Club, to sports clubs of various kinds, from the celebrated Jockey Club to clubs devoted to chess, cricket, bowls, golf, tennis, yachting, shooting and fishing. There are Service clubs and police clubs, and there are a great many clubs and associations of a religious character. There are increasingly clubs for women, British, Chinese, British and Chinese, or International. There are a number of national clubs—particularly those for Americans, Portuguese, Filipinos and Indians. St. Andrew, St. George, St. Patrick and St. David all have their societies. One would say that the list reflected national consciousness to a considerable degree. All hobbies, philately, horticulture, kennels, music, singing, photography, amateur dramatics and so on are catered for. There is even the 'Hong Kong Sunbathing Association (H.K. Nudist S-TY)' which has as its objects 'the practice and popularization of mixed Sun, Air, and Water Bathing entirely in the Nude, in suitable surroundings, and of the Life in the Nude in the Home'.

Social problems abound in Hong Kong. The suppression of gambling, of brothels and of opium-smoking has occupied much

of the attention of the police since the liberation. All these disorders were rife after the war and expanded with the expanding population, but the police have done much to keep them within reasonable bounds. Government has been aware that in the case of prostitution its positive work of prevention and rehabilitation has not been adequate and the Social Welfare Department has given much thought to the problem.

It is considered that the two chief reasons for prostitution are economic and personal. In the first case a woman or a girl is either sold or sells herself because of poverty. She cannot get back her freedom, even if she is lucky enough to have other employment in view, without paying a heavy ransom. In the second case a woman or girl is attracted by a life of prostitution or is mentally deficient.

Much controversy has raged in the past over the question of licensed houses. On the whole Chinese opinion appears to favour them—in many cases strongly. Government, however, has adopted the British view and set its face against resorting to the practice.

A number of Chinese friends told me that if I were investigating all sides of Chinese life I should be aware of the extent to which prostitution was practised and its methods. One day a friend of the most irreproachable character, a staunch pillar of the Church and a family man of great respectability, with whom I should have felt extreme diffidence in discussing the question, expressed this view to me with his invariable wide smile, and proposed that we should spend an evening observing the habits of prostitutes. Suppressing an urge to laugh, I treated the matter with the solemnity with which it was broached, though I had the odd mixed feelings of being invited to bird-watch and to spend a naughty evening with an archbishop.

My friend proposed to pick me up on the chosen evening at 9.30 in his car, and when he arrived I found we were to be well chaperoned as he had with him a wealthy merchant of old-fashioned habits, with whom I was slightly acquainted, clad in a long blue gown and blue cap. The merchant, a most serious-minded and charming old gentleman of over 70, did not speak English, but had brought with him an English-speaking nephew of more modern habits who was on his best behaviour in uncle's presence.

PROSTITUTION

We drove in earnest silence westwards and finally drew up in a street running down to the waterfront. There was no other motor traffic in the street, but pavements and roadway were full of young women strolling up and down, usually in pairs, and young men either singly or in pairs. Everywhere there were groups in conversation. I noticed an old woman hovering round our car. 'She is one of the old women who make the introductions', explained my instructor. After some moments the creature apparently accepted the fact that we were not potential customers and moved away. My companions said that this was one of several streets in Hong Kong where this business went on. The prices here ranged from 12s. 6d. to 25s., the young women in pyjamas being about the former price and those more expensively dressed in slit-up-the-side dresses costing more. My instruction was carried out in the usual manner by object-lessons. A young man and his friend would go up to one of the old women (or she would approach them) and they would explain to her the size and type they sought. She would then go and look for a young woman of the kind required, bring her back and introduce her, and receive a dollar or two dollars fee.

The girl then took the man off to a boarding-house in the neighbourhood where they would occupy a room for a few hours. Such rooms, I was told, have several tenants in a night and the hire of the room falls on the woman. My companions explained that her expenses were considerable: besides her keep and rent she had, like the sing-song girl, to be well dressed and made-up, and paid 'squeeze' to be allowed to carry on unmolested. The male customers, who, as far as I could see, were all Chinese, were said to be, for the most part, seamen or strangers of one sort or another. There are other areas such as Wanchai more frequented by Europeans and Americans.

After about half an hour's watching of this coming and going the hospitable old gentleman took us to his club in West Point, where we had a 'light' supper, having already dined. It was a very quiet evening and we were the only people in the club.

A little shopping, a look at the crowded millions in tenements and squatter colonies, these are enough to bring home the expensiveness of everything, the number of poor, and the amount of money which is made in Hong Kong, and to make one wonder what the share-out is. Nowhere are classes more evident;

they seem to be more marked, to shade off with each other less, than in England, where there is less difference between a bus conductor out of uniform and a city merchant than there is between a coolie and a clerk in Hong Kong. And the difference between a tram conductor and a Taipan is almost as great as that between a candle and the sun. Yet it is not easy to limit the number of classes when it comes to discussing their incomes. Labourers can be divided into unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled, and the middle classes into artisans, clerks, shopkeepers, Government officials, professionals and small business men. On the whole, however, we can get along fairly well with four—the coolies (all Chinese), the Chinese middle class, the European middle class, and the Taipans, the wealthy, both European and Chinese.

In 1939, when a dollar was still, comparatively speaking, a dollar and a day meant nine hours' work, a coolie got from 9d. to 10½d. a day. Since the war his wages have risen from 500 per cent to 700 per cent for those in regular jobs, though the casual labourer still gets the merest pittance. I sometimes think, when I read a news item about the world rice situation, how difficult it must be to the ordinary dweller in this country to appreciate quite what it means that rice is short and its price high to Ali in the Middle East, to Ram Das in India, or to Wong in China. There are Mrs. Ali, Mrs. Ram Das and Mrs. Wong wondering what to put into the clay pot over the thorn or dung fire, and all the little Alis, Ram Dases and Wongs feeling *very* hungry. Rice is the all-important body fuel to every class except the European in Hong Kong, but to Wong the coolie a catty of rice—1½ lb.—a day is an essential if he is to earn enough to keep Mrs. Wong and the little Wongs, and of course what he earns must be enough to buy their rice too. On top of it, it is reasonable that they should also have a little 'sung'. This is the necessary relish without which rice is found dull in all rice-eating countries. If you eat curry in England the rice is almost a side-line—a vegetable. With those who depend on it, it is the substance. The *sung* can be some vegetable, or a *piece* of egg (the Wong family are hardly likely to have a whole egg each), a little bit of meat or fish. The word is used metaphorically in several Eastern languages when asking for a tip. It is just that little bit extra to give savour to life.

In 1841 a catty of good rice cost from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ cents, in 1939 from 7 to 10 cents. In 1944 a catty of fairly indifferent rationed rice cost 44 cents and one of the cheapest quality on the free market anything from 95 cents to \$1.35, or in terms of today's values 1s. 2d. to 1s. 8d. Three-fifths of the population can draw ration rice, but they never find the ration enough and most of the coolies have to buy in the free market or eat something else. Think of this when you wash away the grains of rice still clinging to your curry plate. You remember it when you watch endless workers shovelling rice into their mouths, never dropping a grain and picking up the last grain at the bottom of the bowl. They like at least two of these little bowls at a meal, though I doubt if they often have them. Gone are the days when a man could say he was a three- or four-bowl man, though we did have supper with a manufacturer of shark fins who claimed to be a six-bowl man.

Peace in the world largely depends on rice; humanity depends on it much more than on oil. Yet we—ordinary people—are much more apt to take rice for granted than fuel for the internal-combustion engine.

One of the reasons why, say, a dockyard coolie does not have the same output of work as his opposite number in Europe is that he is paid less. The same consideration applies to the lower paid ranges of white-collar workers. The junior low-paid Chinese clerk has less output than one in the West. Before the war he got about £63 a year. This was about double the pay of the manual worker. But the non-European middle class covers a wide range of incomes and occupations. Many one-man business shopkeepers have a very small income. Their motto is 'Small profits, quick returns', and it is said not to have been unusual for a dealer in drugs or groceries to have been content to sell his goods at cost price, relying on the sale of the packing-case in which they came for his profit.

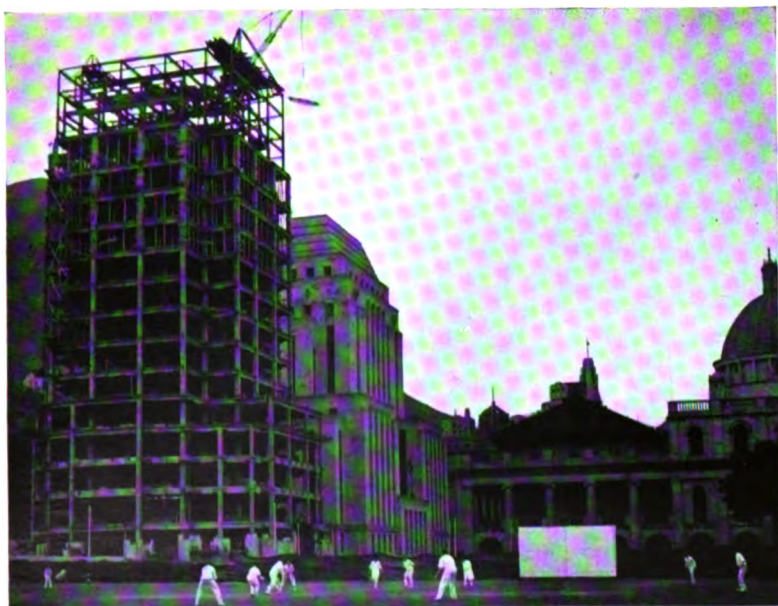
Nowadays a family in this class—clerk or skilled artisan—might have an income of from £10 to £18 a month. There may be a father and mother and one child. They spend rather more than £6 on food, £1 or so in rent—they won't get more than a bedspace for this, 6s. or so on clothes and shoes, about 12s. 6d. on fuel and light, and upwards of 3s. 9d. on cleaning materials such as washing and toilet soap, toothbrushes and toothpastes,

and razor blades. These you will never find absent in a Chinese home, however humble. In many a workshop, where the hands sleep on the job, you see these articles conspicuous on some shelf or in some corner in which the owner can stow them in the morning when the dormitory has become again a carpenter's or a blacksmith's shop.

Nearly 30 per cent of the money spent on food goes on rice, and of that only a quarter is rationed rice. The *sung* may be fresh or salted fish, pork or beef, rarely chicken or duck, or eggs and vegetables. Then there is peanut oil to cook in, such things as fruit, soya-bean sauce, and tea. Perhaps as much as 12s. 6d. may be spent on meals at food-stalls and so on. The rest of the family budget goes on such things as education (which no Chinese in Hong Kong will miss for his children if he can get it at all—and for one child it may be anything from 10s. to 12s. 6d. a month), tobacco and cigarettes (in this item the clerk is more likely to economize than the artisan—you can get Pirates at 4½d. for ten or Gold Flake at 6½d.), doctors and medicines, tram, bus and ferry fares, hairdressing, newspapers, and an occasional cinema. It is a pretty tight fit.

The example we have taken is at the bottom end of the middle-class group. A couple of young journalists told us things which made us appreciate that middle-class problems are of no mean order, and in fact have a close resemblance to some of those of England. For a man with a family to live reasonably and by no means extravagantly he should earn, they said, £100 a month. Good flats, built since the war, cost £25 to £35 a month and you can only get them by paying enormous key money. To raise such sums there are Loan Associations. Most Chinese do not use banks—in any case they would have no securities for overdrafts—so they form these associations between friends.

As these two young men pointed out, they have to dress decently and a good suit costs £20. All necessities are expensive and the price of food is high. Even lunches in snack restaurants are several times English prices. One of these young men said that pre-war his wife, like 90 per cent of the Chinese women of that class, had left all housework to amahs and spent her time pleasantly in gossip with friends and mahjong parties. The war changed all that and she had to start a shop. Today she manages



Cricket and The Bank symbolize the strength behind Hong Kong.
The skeleton in the foreground is the new Bank of China



‘Side by side the junks lie closely packed all along the waterfront,
with their sterns against the quay’ (p. 39)

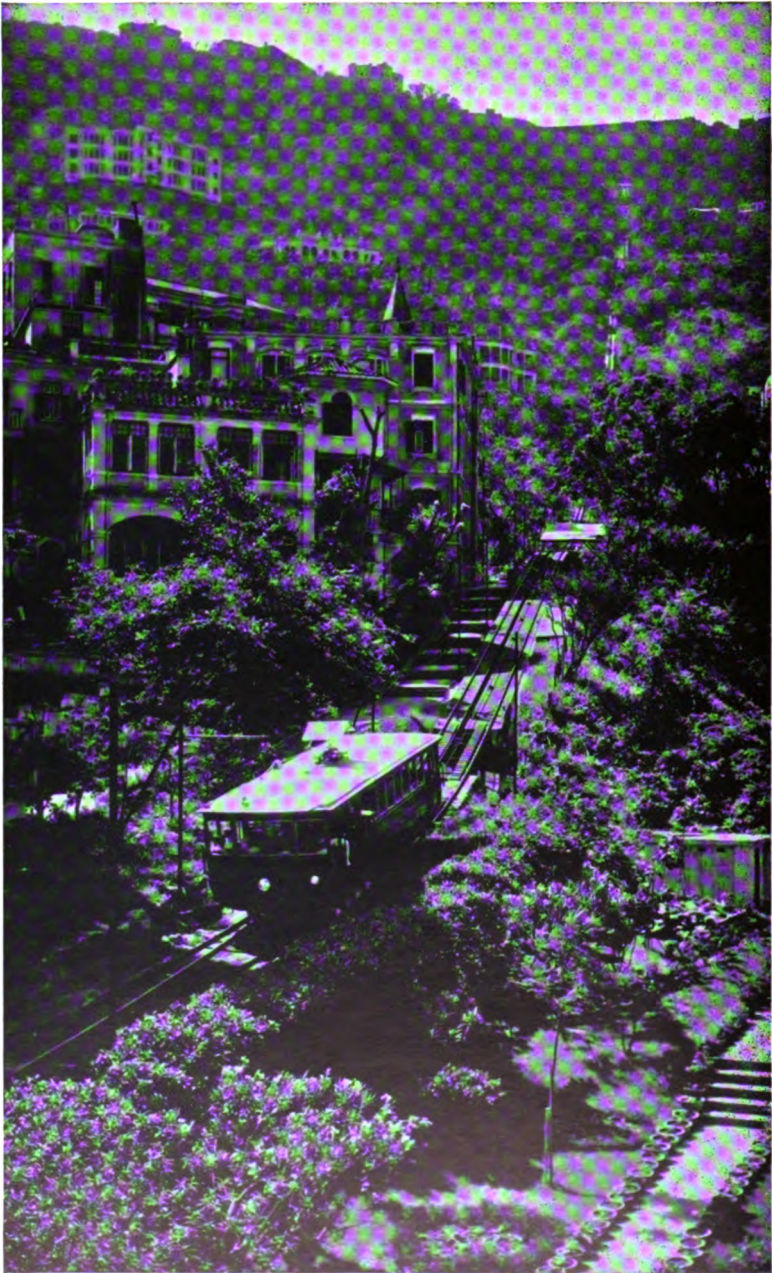
PLATE IX



Long and narrow signs, painted in gay colours, hang like banners above one of Hong Kong's steep side streets between crowded tenements



Mountains and islands. In the foreground is one of Hong Kong's smaller reservoirs



‘Reasonably, quietly, the tram starts on its ten-minute run up the mountain: soon one is in the midst of a primeval jungle’ (p. 44)

PLATE XII

a shop in Shau Ki Wan and a soda fountain in Kowloon. They have three children and he pays £1 10s. a month for each child to go as a day pupil to a Chinese private school. It has to be remembered that school years are long for a Chinese—15 years or more. For the first 10 years a child learns Chinese and then, at about 15, goes to a middle school for English and works up to matriculation. He also pays £3 15s. a month to a woman teacher to coach his children four evenings a week and thinks it very cheap to get one at that price.

An income of £100 a month is of course not inconsiderable in Hong Kong and there are many Europeans who have not so much. With them the pattern of the monthly expenditure is different. Most of them will not have to pay so much rent, for most Government servants and employees of big firms have assistance in quarters, or free quarters. This, however, does not mean that they are *all* adequately housed. I met one quite senior Government officer who was sharing a hotel bedroom with a colleague and those who have single rooms in hotels are comparatively numerous. On the other hand, those who are housed according to Government's intentions are very well housed. The flats they have would have a rental of £500 a year or more in London—they are London 'type' flats. If they were on the free market in Hong Kong they would probably cost more than that and the key money would be astronomical. Other differences arise from the methods of dealing with family obligations, entertainment and so on. Food is probably as expensive for both the Chinese and Europeans with £100 a month. The European's expenditure is probably rather less: he does not eat quite so expensively or extensively, and, strange as it may seem, imported food costs less than local produce. Cold storage Dover sole, pleasantly known as 'Dragons' Tongues', costs less than an equivalent amount of Hong Kong *garoupa*. Just over a pound of fillet in the market costs 10s., Australian fillet of beef, according to the price list of a big firm, costs 3s. a pound, Australian eggs cost 4s. 5d. a dozen, local Leghorn 8s. 2d. a dozen. Local pork is about 5s. a pound. European type foods are all expensive. Butter, for instance, costs 3s. 7d. a pound, coffee 7s. 3d. a pound, good quality jam 2s. 6d. a pound jar.

Pre-war an expatriate European received about double the salary which he would have received for work of equivalent

character in his country of origin. The difference now is probably less, but many married men still perhaps maintain two homes while their children are being educated abroad. On the other hand, many now have their children with them and send them to King George V School. They probably still keep more servants than Chinese do and their servants are more expensive. They certainly maintain more than they would do at home, but considerably fewer than they did pre-war in Hong Kong. Entertaining among middle-class Europeans is no longer on an extravagant scale and wives often not only do some housework and marketing, but have to take employment themselves. In these respects the changes wrought by the enormously increased cost of living are for the good. They have done much to make the European part of the community less isolated, and economically at any rate to fuse the population more, though social differences have not been so much affected.

Senior men in business firms are much better off than most Government officials, though life is terribly expensive for all of them. One business family, consisting of husband and wife and two children, paid £63 a month for food alone. Their drinks cost them only £3, for they could get them at lower rates from their firm. Meat, milk and bread from the dairy farm took £19, the compradore (or grocer) £16, and the market bill was £22. The cook cost £10 a month, the coolie £6, and the wash-amah £6. Before the war they were £1 12s., £1 5s. and £1 2s. 6d. (a boy) respectively. Many families have taken to replacing boys by amahs as they are cheaper. These increases in wages of course affect the Government servants too. The children go to King George V School, where the fees are not very expensive, but, excluding clothes, they estimate that the children cost them £350 a year. Electricity is very expensive on the Peak on account of fires, baths, and the necessity of having a drying-room. It costs this family £15 a month. On these items alone, therefore, they are spending over £1,500 a year, a sum which is out of reach of many Government officials.

One pernicious pre-war habit seems to be dying out—the chit system. You signed chits for anything from an ice-cream to an evening dress, and then on what was called All Shroffs' Day, the 10th of the month, the bill collectors came round. People are finding it much more economical to pay as they buy.

It will probably have been realized that these middle-class cases cover a very wide range of income, reaching considerably high figures at the top of the scale. They include all Government officials from clerks upwards. But the incomes of the upper class are far higher. In this group are included the big business men or Taipans, who are largely European, and a number of very wealthy Chinese. Both these categories have always existed in Hong Kong and vast fortunes have been made (and some of them lost) during the Colony's history.

But to rich and poor of the Chinese in Hong Kong the quality of food is all-important. It is said that in the good old days a single meal sometimes took three months to prepare and lasted three days. High as the visual arts rank in China, the supreme appeal is to the sense of taste. The culinary art is certainly above all others in Hong Kong.

Life in the cities is infinite in its variety; it is kaleidoscopic in its varied colours, always changing. It presents a complete contrast with the life of the peasants and the boat people, which has, as we shall see, a constant pattern, restful with its quiet tones and essential sanity. It is not difficult to record the latter, but the ever-shifting mosaic of city life is less easy to capture.

Sometimes, dining in some home in Hong Kong, I would catch myself contrasting my immediate surroundings with those in which I had eaten my dinner the previous day. The pattern of warm hospitality was the same in Hong Kong whether one's hosts were rich or poor, but I often wondered if anybody else flitted daily between such contrasts as we did. Thoughts of this nature made yesterday seem acons away; a dinner in spacious surroundings, with glittering glass and shining silver on white linen, moving with well-ordered precision and silent service through its predestined courses towards its inevitable climax to the accompaniment of well-ordered talk, became like a memory of the distant past, and some flat in the city or cottage home in the New Territories with a cheerful crowded company of all ages helping themselves and each other with chopsticks would be transplanted to the other end of the world. More than that, the world itself which one knew seemed very distant. One read about it with one's breakfast coffee in the *South China Morning Post*, and if it had some vague bearing on

that sensitive organism which is Hong Kong it would be given headlines, but that was all.

We were entertained by people of all sorts and conditions in restaurants, houses, flats, huts, tenements, clubs of all kinds, until at the end we began to feel some sense of the pattern of the life, however varied it was. The kaleidoscope became a tapestry of many scenes which could be studied in detail but which were linked up into a balanced whole. Some threads worked their way through different scenes, others never left the one. Here and there in these pages we shall meet some of the people whose lives in different coloured strands of silk wove in and out of the fascinating embroidery which is Hong Kong. But as one looks at individuals among the crowds which throng the pavements, one wonders what happens behind the door at which they finally stop.

London, it is often said, is a place in which it is very easy to be lonely, and I imagine that is true of any big city. But if you want to be friendly I should think it is easier to make friends in Hong Kong than in most big cities, because the people are always ready to make friends with you. Soon the feeling of strangeness wears off. The picturesque and colourful still delight the eye; unusual food excites the palate no less; I daresay some grow accustomed to the noise, but that funny little man in a blue cloth gown whom you have seen several mornings scurrying across the road when the lights flicked green, that cheerful bespectacled business man whom you pass in the arcade, that important-looking old man with a beard like the Emperor of China who owns the large car which parks in Statue Square, and of course that fascinating little creature with the dimpled smile whose fallen handkerchief you restored in the China Emporium, are no longer something strange, Oriental and mysterious seen through a plate-glass window when you meet them, but People with very lovable and easily understandable characteristics. So may their counterparts be anywhere, but there is something so civilized about the Chinese and above all there is that capacity for giving friendship quickly. Quite why this is I do not know: they do not seem to have the same reserve as others. Even a Chinese who likes solitary peace and quiet will be very friendly.

One evening as we drove with the excellent Mr. Chung to dine with a couple whom we had met no more than once, as

fellow-guests at a luncheon party, I asked why it was that people were so kind and hospitable to strangers.

'The Chinese', he said, 'love making friends. You love a house and you extend your love to the birds living in the corner of the house.'

Friendship with this couple developed. We dined several times with them and with intimate friends of theirs who had a nephew of 18 waiting to come to England to study the textile industry. When at last he got his permit and arrived in England he came to stay with us for a week-end. It would be reasonable to suppose that Chinese visitors on their first visit to Europe might not necessarily 'know all the answers', and they might not therefore be as comfortable as one could wish in post-war England. But I have never found easier visitors to entertain than Chinese. They are the most delightful people to have in the house and leave you on the Monday morning with the feeling that you would like to see them again on the following Friday. I remember in particular Florence and Lee, a young couple whom we met for the first time in London on a Tuesday, who came down on the Friday and by Monday morning had left a gap which despite subsequent meetings has never been quite filled. Florence, before one was really aware of it, was washing-up as if she had been at the sink all her life: Lee was annexed by our small daughter and spent a good deal of his week-end making her a rabbit-hutch. We dined with them in their London flat the night before they went back to Hong Kong, and as we were leaving we discovered that they were going off to do the washing-up for a former landlady who was ill and who had 14 English boarders in her house.

Theirs had been a London romance. They had happened to fly to England in the same aeroplane, fallen in love, and got married with reluctant and telegraphic parental consent. Our first lunch with Florence's father in Hong Kong was mainly remarkable for his anxiety to know all we could tell him about a son-in-law on whom he had never set eyes and whose parents in Shanghai he did not know. He said he had wired Florence many times that she could not marry Lee until he had seen him. However, as an English friend in London, the Hong Kong Government's representative, Grimwood, had pleaded by telegram for her, he gave his consent. (Strange job for a Government

representative!) We spoke well of Lee and said what a nice couple they made. He said how much he loved Florence as she was his first-born and had a character like his. 'In that case,' I said, 'she will have chosen a man you will also like.' He was very pleased with that. It seemed to clinch the matter and he rose suddenly and shook hands warmly on it!

'I hope', he said, 'that she is a *little* on top. Chinese custom is not very good: it is better for the wife to be a little on top. If he is a bit henpecked the home will be happy. There will be no concubine and all will be well.' I felt he need have no misgivings on that score. Florence certainly had Lee very well in hand.

Such is young romance in modern Hong Kong. It was very different to that of old times. Marriage was a matter of arrangement between parents with a middleman as go-between. Rarely did the young people know each other or even see each other until the wedding day. The middleman would go to the parents of the prospective bridegroom bearing a paper, of the lucky red colour of course, with particulars about the girl, who was then looked over by the mother and other female relatives of the young man. If approved the man's parents sent a similar paper to the bride's, and if satisfaction was general a date would be chosen for the sending of the first present by the bridegroom. This would be jewellery, some cakes and money, and if accepted by the parents of the bride it showed the girl's acceptance of her marriage. The dollars were a relic of bride purchase money and when that custom died out the money was often returned, showing that the parents were willing to give their daughter and not sell her. Further presents were sent and letters exchanged which were considered written evidence of the marriage. On the day of the marriage itself, usually about a month after the last present had been sent, the middleman was dispatched by the bridegroom's parents with the bride's chair draped with red silk. In this she was carried to her future home and accompanied into the house by her bridegroom. She then had to kneel and bow to heaven and earth and the ancestral tablets and to her husband, who returned the compliment. The observance of ancestor-worship was an important feature of the marriage ceremony. Whatever degree of festivity or whatever variations there were, the three essentials, parents' consent, the

middleman, and the ancestor-worship, were always strictly observed.

Today the Registrar of Marriages in Hong Kong deals with both ancient and modern customs, and his task is more complicated than that of his opposite number in this country. This is partly because he can register Chinese customary marriages. This makes them monogamous, and as these days Chinese women are showing that, like their sisters in the West, they prefer a man all to themselves, the practice of registering them is growing. Couples arrive in the most colourful garb to get married. Brides often have all the traditional, highly embroidered finery of old China, and their grooms are in long gowns with a black waistcoat on top. On the other hand, the modern-minded miss wears white satin and a veil, with her bridegroom in a smart tussore suit. Witnesses are often women with babies strapped on their backs.

Addresses cause the Registrar trouble—‘Unnumbered hut in such and such Squatter settlement’, or ‘Junk Number so-and-so’. In the case of a Chinese marriage the certificate presented for registration reads:

‘It is a fine day for the wedding of Mr. ——— and Miss ——— while the may flower is in blossom and I hope that both of the parties will be quite satisfied with each other.

‘I further anticipate that there will be a happy house for them and for their descendants.

‘I hereby certify that the said Mr. ——— and Miss ——— have signed this, the marriage certificate.’

It is part of the Registrar’s duty to do all that he can to ensure that no one who is already engaged in a valid marriage contracts another. It is not at all easy to do this when marriages contracted in China or in other parts of the world are concerned, but a great deal of trouble is taken over it. There is an increasing number of mixed marriages, and in some cases Service personnel are not as wise as they might be over their choices. It is not the Registrar’s business to see if Glamorous Blossom is all her intended thinks she is, but in such cases the Secretary for Chinese Affairs does his best to act *in loco parentis*. He is indeed the parental authority *par excellence* as far as Chinese are concerned, and outside his office door is a continual queue of domestic cases waiting for a wise word to prevent a family break-up.

In old days young wives had a hard time with their mothers-in-law and seem to have spent quite a time on their knees, kowtowing to them. In fact a certain amount of kowtowing still survives and I have been told by men of 50 or so, completely westernized, that when they go and see their 'old men' they have to kowtow. Some of them go only rarely on that very account! It is not an uncommon practice on Chinese New Year and on the birthdays of the old people.

We met one delightful old lady, Luk Po Wan, who having now no means was spending the evening of her days in the North Point relief camp. She was a relic of the bound-feet age. She showed her feet to us—they were no larger than those of a five-year-old child and were frightfully deformed.

She told us of the agony she had suffered and showed us how, for five years, she used to crawl about or be carried by servants. 'My father was an army officer,' she said, 'and the higher the position the smaller the feet. Unless your feet were bound you had no chance of a proper marriage, you would only be a concubine.'

She had lived in Hong Kong and had been married to a Government servant. During the late war a shell hit her home and she lost everything. She has one son, now married, but he can do nothing for her as he earns only £7 a month and has many children. I asked her if she could walk properly now.

'No,' she said; 'if the wind is strong it blows me down.'

'Did you think that it was a good thing to have your feet bound?'

'If you have a nice pair of feet, why deform them?' she asked. 'And the pain was so awful that I used to lie on my bed with my feet in the air to let the blood run down. When the revolution came I took off my bandages and slept the whole night through for the first time.'

One could almost feel the pain as she described it. It struck me as strange that a woman living in Hong Kong had to wait until the revolution in China to take off her bandages. In order to encourage contraction of the feet, she said, some medicine was poured inside the bandages. It served the purpose but also caused sores. A child's bandages were sewn on so that she could not take them off. No children thought of using scissors: they were too frightened of their parents.

'Did everyone agree when it was decreed that the binding of feet should end?' I asked.

'When Sun Yat-Sen said it was a good thing to abolish it, everyone agreed to the change.'

She said that her husband, Chan, who had been an Urban Council employee, was also glad of the change. They had been married without ever seeing each other. In her day it was often the custom for a girl of 16 to be married but not to live with her husband for six years or more. She herself was married at 16, and when she went to visit her in-laws and had to stay the night, she slept with her mother-in-law. She went to her husband when she was 22.

She did not think much of her mother-in-law. 'I had to wait on her all the time. I had to obey her always. I couldn't sit down when she was standing. I had to bring her tea before she went to bed and wait on her at meal-times, so that I scarcely ever had a proper sit-down meal myself. I was on my knees kowtowing so much, and they got so sore I had to wear three skirts and wore them through.'

'No,' she said, 'I was never angry or rebellious about it, because it was the custom. If I rebelled against my mother-in-law, perhaps my mother might have been treated badly by her daughter-in-law. Today, if someone yells at me I still get frightened.'

'I haven't had much happiness,' she went on, 'I've always been kowtowing. A woman has a hard life—first she must obey her father, then her husband, then her son. And my mother-in-law died only recently, during the Japanese occupation.'

She thought things were much better now. 'A girl can pick and choose her own husband. Young misses don't tolerate nonsense from in-laws or from their parents.'

'Does your daughter-in-law kowtow to you?' I asked.

'Kowtow', she laughed. 'Not much! Daughters-in-law don't kowtow nowadays. You're lucky if they don't call you an old hen!'

I asked her if her son and daughter-in-law often came to see her.

'Oh no', she said. 'He rarely comes and I haven't seen her for two years. No one bothers about me now. When you have money relatives come and see you. When you have nothing, they

leave you alone. I've only my son left. When my home was bombed I lost my grandchild, two amahs and others in the house, and I was wrapped in a blanket and let down from a fourth-floor window.'

It seemed a desperately sad story to me. She would have been such a nice old mother-in-law and here she was in a poor-law camp on a bed with fifty others in the room. Yet she was so gay and happy. I asked her why.

'Yes, I'm happy now', she said. 'I became a Catholic two years ago and now I have peace. I'm just looking forward to dying.'

I couldn't understand why that son never went and visited his old mother. Chinese have such respect for their parents. Chinese friends explained that it was a matter of 'face'. He had no money to help her, therefore he stayed away.

The worthy Mr. Chung explained to me that he was by Chinese custom my grandfather, for he bestowed upon me my Chinese name. I was proud to have so noteworthy an ancestor and to discover that Mr. Chung's grandchildren included many illustrious names. I gathered it was one of his duties to present British officials with new names and wondered whether this had not grown up as a desirable precaution after Lord Napier, no doubt called something like Na Poo, had been given two characters meaning Laboriously Vile. Mr. Chung, of course, gives everybody *very* distinguished characters, but I have no doubt it would be equally easy to find them less flattering ones.

It is quite an art: Admiral Harcourt, for example, he had endowed with the name Ha Kok. Ha, meaning summer, is a Chinese surname. Kok, meaning honest, sincere or guileless, was the name of Chung Kok, marquis of To Yeung, who in A.D. 446 as commander-in-chief conquered a kingdom in what is now Indo-China from which bandits had continually disturbed Chinese territory. It is a rarely-used character, and, as Grandfather Chung said, it at once reminds any *educated* Chinese of the answer the young marquis made to his uncle when he was asked what his ambition in life was. 'I hope', he said, 'that one day I'll take advantage of a settled and favourable wind to ride through thousands of miles of the ocean's waves.' What better name for a British Admiral?

My own was sheer flattery: Ng Ka Lam. Ng, meaning five, is a Cantonese surname. In North China it becomes *Wu* (slightly

sinister, thanks to Matheson Lang). *Ka* means to praise and benefit, *Lam* means a forest or a great number of men. Joined together, *Ka Lam* means 'benefactor of the literary world'!

Mr. Chung's family has been in Hong Kong for 80 years, coming from Macao, where four generations ago they became Catholics. They were not a well-to-do family and Mr. Chung, being a devoted and honest Government servant, is not rich either. He was not able to have an expensive education and has acquired a very considerable erudition by self-education and sheer hard work.

It was pleasant to watch the grandfatherly Mr. Chung, no less important, but more serene and benign, at home in the role of paterfamilias. We had a happy evening there with him and his family. Mrs. Chung, charming, modern and slim, has much too young an air to be the mother of five sons and two daughters, four of whom are grown up and two engaged. In all circles in Hong Kong, except the very poorest, you find amahs, and although the mistress of the house might be able to cook, she rarely did so, and the twice-daily marketing was done by an amah. Mrs. Chung as a devout Catholic went to early mass every morning, returning to see three of her sons off to school and to breakfast with Mr. Chung before he went to the office. As there was an amah to do the shopping and most of the housework, Mrs. Chung said she spent much of her day sewing or visiting and receiving friends. Of course there is more to be done when all the family—including the fiancés—are there for an evening meal, as on this occasion, and Mrs. Chung herself had made a special dish, oysters and seaweed. She and her daughters and an amah prepared the table while the sons sat reading newspapers or listening not over-enthusiastically to their father expounding to us on funeral customs. There was a distant sound of a gramophone, or perhaps wireless, from the flat below, and the noise of trams and cars in Hennessy Road could be heard through the open windows. It might have been any flat in any town and there was no more feeling of strangeness than there would be in a first visit to the home of an office friend.

We had no closer associate in Hong Kong than Mr. Chan, whom Government had appointed to assist me in my researches. He had something of the seriousness of Mr. Chung and yet there was always a lurking look of amusement behind his

large horn-rimmed spectacles. His constant endeavour was to find something strange and new for us to see. He frequently gave up his evenings, and Saturday or Sunday afternoons, to take us round, but one thing he could never do was to forgo his attendance at the Rhenish Mission Church on Sunday mornings. His whole family belonged to this church, which, with its activities such as bazaars and social gatherings, played a very important part in their lives.

I have said already that it is not a custom for Chinese to entertain in their own homes. One felt, therefore, very moved by the generosity of a family which invited strangers into their homes, often on the report of the one member of the family who knew them. In many of these homes, usually in flats, accommodation is limited and one room does, as indeed it often does in a small London flat, for dining- and sitting-room. So it was with gratitude for the opening of another front door that we went with Mr. Chan to his parents' home in Kowloon. This consisted of a large living-room with a verandah, two bedrooms, and a servants' bedroom, a kitchen, and a bathroom without modern sanitation.

Mr. Chan's father was a doctor. He and his wife came to Hong Kong two years ago. It appears to be usual in Chinese families for the sons to bear the same first name and daughters to share a common one also. In this family all the sons are Yik, which means Wing and symbolizes protection by God, like chickens under a wing, and the daughters are all Shuk, which means Gentleness. The eldest of the family is Chan Yik Ping (Protected Calm), who, like his father, is a doctor, but he is also a much travelled person and something of a polyglot, for he has a Spanish diploma, knows French well, is fluent in English, and has some knowledge of German. No. 2 is our Mr. Chan or Chan Yik Hi (Protected Hope). Married, with three small daughters, he is very interested in farming and was in fact proposing to go in for it seriously in his retirement and already owns land in the New Territories.

No. 3, Chan Yik King (Protected Righteousness), has been 15 years in Penang as an Inspector of Schools and there we met him on our way home. It was interesting to see his objectivity as an expatriate Government servant. It brought home to me that it is not the exclusive prerogative of one's fellow British

officials in the Colonial Service. Chan Yik King discussed Europeans, Chinese, Indians and Malays and their outlooks with equal impartiality and good sense. A Chinese in Singapore had said to me 'We Chinese who live here may be expected to become citizens of Malaya, but we shall still be Chinese not only in race but in sentiment'. Mr. Chan on the other hand was sure that many Chinese had become good citizens of Malaya to the exclusion of China.

The fourth son had died young. Then came No. 5, the eldest daughter, Chan Shuk Yi (Gentle Virtue), who is married to a pharmacist in Canton. Chan Yik Kin (Protected Perseverance) is the sixth child and he is a clergyman in Kowloon. No. 7 is another daughter, Chan Shuk Man (Gentle Alertness), who is married to a school teacher in Hainan. No. 8 is the youngest son, Chan Yik On (Protected Peace), who is also a doctor. He was then in London, having also been for some time in Vienna and in Switzerland. Quiet and unobtrusive like many of the family, he too came down to stay with us when we returned home. One felt he had had rather a dull week-end, though he was perfectly happy exploring Dover and other Kentish coast towns. He wrote a charming letter in which he said the week-end had made him very homesick as it was his first taste of home life since leaving Hong Kong.

The last three members of the family are Chan Shuk Shan (Gentle Carefulness), who is clerk to a clergyman, Chan Shuk Chi (Gentle Wisdom), who lives at home, and Chan Shuk Tsz (Gentle Mercy), who is a doctor and whose husband, Dr. Hwang, teaches bacteriology in the University.

Although by no means all the members of the family were there that night, the room seemed full of Chans, old, middle-aged, young, and children, and when the table was laid we all sat round while Mr. Chan senior bowed his head and said a long grace in Chinese. It was to be a family dinner but the food seemed elaborate enough for a party. The shark's fins were cooked in an unusual way, there were oysters in batter, fried fish with egg sauce, white boiled rice and fried rice, pork and vegetables. Mrs. Chan senior sat silently smiling, for she knew no English, but she kept an observant eye on the young amah who brought in the food. Altogether it was a very homely evening, memorable for the sense of kindly friendship offered to strangers by this Christian family.

Among the rush-hour crowds in Hong Kong you cannot fail to be struck by the number of 'business girls'. Girls, every one with short, black, permed hair, and most of them with long slit-up-the-sides Chinese dresses, hurrying along to office or shop. Recent as the business girl is in England, she is not so new as in China, for in the former there are many mothers, and grandmothers, who were business girls, but in Hong Kong, although there are many modern mothers, there are still a great number who by their dress and appearance show that they belong to another system of life. It is impossible to see these well-dressed, assured and composed young women without speculating about their background.

Rosa Hui, an office worker, was one of them. She loved her job and she loved dancing, the cinema and mahjong. Rosa, indeed, was a happy pagan, gay and kindly and bright, and very devoted to her widowed mother with whom she lived. They have a small flat to which they cling because it has a pre-war rental, 'although it's very small and not in a good neighbourhood', said Rosa, so she invited us one night to dinner in her family shop. Chinese are much ruled by 'face': they would lose face if they asked you to dinner in crowded and uncomfortable surroundings and if they did not give you at least a rather better meal than they would ordinarily have. Rosa, and I am glad to say most of our friends, treated us really as friends or as 'one of the family' and often gave us just what they would have themselves, or at any rate explained what was a special dish. But this was not added for 'face' reasons but just to make it a bit more of a party all round. Rosa's father had kept an electrical and radio shop and now that he is dead two of her brothers run it, while a third brother is, like herself, in Government service as a revenue inspector. Rosa gets about £22 a month and she and her mother live on that and what they get from the earnings of the shop. They could get considerable key money for the flat, but then they would have nowhere to go. Rosa and her mother have a maid, which is almost essential, as Rosa goes to work. Mother is of the old-fashioned kind, simple in her habits and serene in her outlook, but like most Chinese mothers of today she manages not to be too perturbed at a young daughter with modern ideas and independent outlook. I was really surprised at the number of Mammās I met who have managed apparently

to accommodate themselves to the ways of the young. I suspect that they did not always approve, but at least, without changing their own ways, they resigned themselves and were there to help if the young needed them.

When we arrived among all the electric irons, globes, lamp-shades and radios in the little shop in a busy side-street, Rosa was already at it and most of the dinner already cooked. 'I shouldn't come to the kitchen,' she called out, 'you'll find it pretty grubby.' But there was nothing much the matter with it, though it was simple and all she had was a stove of the kind you find all over Africa and the East, earthen partitions in which you use wood or charcoal. There was a tap, but no sink, and the floor was cement, and there was one table to work on or put the dishes on. But it was quite enough for the back kitchen of a shop that was not constantly in use. Rosa was frying onions. 'You must do each ingredient separately if you want the whole dish to taste nice.' After the onions, in went the beans, then the eggs.

While Rosa finished off her cooking I sat on a sofa with Mrs. Allinson, who works in the Labour Office, one of the finest and most likeable characters in Hong Kong, talking to her and Rosa's brothers and drinking gin and orange. It was raining slightly outside and it was fun watching the passers-by up and down the street and what was going on in a trunk shop opposite. Another guest was Mr. Lee, an Australian Chinese in the theatrical business. We learnt much of great interest from him that night on matters theatrical, for he knew the business not only from a Chinese but from a European and an American angle.

Presently the brothers Hui put up the shutters and—hey presto!—the shop was a brilliantly lit dining-room with the ceiling fan whirling merrily over our heads and keeping us really cool on a hot, stuffy night. And what a dinner Rosa had prepared! She was an excellent and lively hostess; Mr. Lee reminisced in lively fashion and a strong Australian accent, and Mamma, though she did not talk, obviously enjoyed the party.

On the whole, middle-class family dinners of this kind revealed much the same sort of characters in a family. The older mothers were generally smiling, happy and kind. Usually they spoke little or no English and probably for this reason were

largely silent. They had no fripperies: their straight hair was drawn back from the face and confined in a neat bun. They wore the usual pyjamas, generally a blue coat and black silk trousers or a plain black dress. The more modern mothers of boys and girls rising 20 had their perms and wore dresses like their daughters. Often they spoke a utilizable amount of English.

Another girl of this class but of quite a different temperament was one of Rosa's colleagues, Nancy Chen. Nancy was born in Hong Kong and her father was a private auditor. She was educated at a London Missionary Society school for 12 years, five years in Chinese with a little English, and for the rest of the time in English with a little Chinese. She matriculated and when war broke out she was already working, but when the Japanese occupied Hong Kong she got away to Free China, where for a time she earned her living by teaching. But not caring much for the work she wrote to the British Embassy in Chungking and applied for work there. She found employment with them until the end of the war, and with their help she got her parents out of Hong Kong. 'It was there in Chungking also', she said, 'that I saw the Truth and became a Seventh Day Adventist.' She is the only Christian in the family. Like her sisters, who are now indifferent to religion, she said, she grew up learning to 'mutter prayers for riches, health, prosperity, and so on at the household shrines'. Her mother, now aged 55, prays to 'any god who will help her', but prays only at home and never in the temples. Her father, aged 80, has burnt all his gods 'because he felt none of the family would worship them after he had gone'.

Now Nancy goes to Happy Valley Seventh Day Church, keeping the Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, and working at the office on Sundays. She does not eat pork—which must be difficult in a Chinese household—or shellfish, nor go to cinemas, nor does she play mahjong, but after her day's work she goes home to knit, or sew, or read the Bible. Her pay is the same as Rosa's and she gives £6 to her mother for her keep and £3 towards the wages of the two amahs—a cook and a wash-amah—so there is not much left for clothes, fares, medical fees and so on, and it is not surprising that she said she could save very little.

These unmarried working girls in Hong Kong appeared content and happy to live at home with the family, contributing to the expenses from their salaries. The question of accommodation for those girls whose families did not live in Hong Kong was another matter and many such found a home in Y.W.C.A. hostels and the like. Midday meals were another problem, for in Hong Kong young women do not go into every type of public restaurant without an escort. Some solved it by going home or bringing food with them, others by forming a pool and ordering it from nearby cafés or by lunching in one or other of the women's clubs, and some by going to those cafés which were considered 'all right'. Many shop employees, both girls and men, get their meals provided by the employers, though this is not the case in European firms, but then their salaries are higher.

Some days after that dinner with Rosa in the shop, she rang up to say that she understood from Mr. Lee that one or other of us had said we wanted to meet 'some old-fashioned Chinese ladies' and would we get in touch with his sister, Mrs. Chow, at the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club? Neither of us had any recollection of saying anything of the sort, but we made a date with Mrs. Chow by telephone and then went to see her. I presumed that old-fashioned Chinese ladies might not like anything male in their club, so I stayed outside. I was of course fetched in and I certainly need not have worried.

Sitting round a heavily laden tea-table I was introduced by Mrs. Chow to Mrs. Yee, Mrs. Li and Mrs. Chan. There seemed to be nothing at all old-fashioned about these ladies. All spoke fluent English and all wore the latest fashion in dress, hair-do's and nail varnish. Their conversation proved no more old-fashioned than their appearance, and nothing could have amused them more than being told what we had been expecting.

The club had been founded eleven years ago, beginning as a relief organization for refugees from China. It is linked with the Y.W.C.A. (which has for long played an important part in Hong Kong community life), and Mrs. Li, who is one of the club's permanent directors, was in 1950 also Chairman of the Hong Kong Council of Women, affiliated to the U.K. National Council of Women. The Council has sub-committees studying legislature, public health, social welfare, education, housing and

so on, and they make reports and proposals to Government. It takes particular interest in the law as it affects women; for instance, there was a different scale of maintenance for legitimate and illegitimate children and the Council voiced its protest to the Attorney-General. 'At once', said Mrs. Chan, who is also very keen on the work of the Council, 'we had a reply saying the matter would be looked into, and a few weeks later we were told "it is going to be altered".'

Mrs. Chan has been doing her best to have the law altered also in respect of concubines, so that Hong Kong law should correspond to the law in China which was changed in 1925. At present Hong Kong law in this respect is still based on the old Chinese law whereby a man leaves his estate to sons only, whether from the wife or concubine, and daughters of the wife get no more than a dowry. The campaign for the rights of women induced Government to set up an investigating committee. At a meeting of the Council of Women held in 1948 Mrs. Chan had moved this resolution:

That the Government revise the Ordinances pertaining to the laws of marriage, divorce and inheritance according to Chinese custom, and bring these into line with the laws of China as laid down in the Code of 1925, and further to appoint a woman to sit in consultative capacity on any Committee should such be formed to consider the revision of these Ordinances.

Mrs. Chan protested that although China had changed the old laws of the Tsing dynasty, Hong Kong had not followed suit. Under the Civil Code of the Republic of China, 1925, concubines are neither permitted nor recognized. Hong Kong provides for divorces for those married in registry or church but not for those married according to Chinese laws. The Civil Code of China distributes inheritance between male and female, but Hong Kong, as already said, maintains the old law whereby estate goes to the sons only.

The campaign did not go unnoticed by the Press and the *China Mail* bore a headline 'Don't get us wrong about concubines', explaining underneath that this had been said by a member of the Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club (Mrs. Chan) when she was explaining that the points proposed were no more than points of reference. 'A wrong impression', went on the *China Mail*, 'had been created among the public that Hong

Kong Chinese women had laid down specified rules under which their husbands might take in concubines.'

As this story developed I was soon helpless with laughter, induced at the outset by the old-fashioned nature of the conversation. Mrs. Chan, generally known, as I learnt, as Auntie Vi, was enchanted when I dubbed her the 'Mrs. Pankhurst of Hong Kong'. Mrs. Chow, whom I discovered was the daughter-in-law of Sir Shouson Chow, one of Hong Kong's famous grand old men, gave me a list of the committee pointing out who they all were. She was to be known as Rose. Grey-haired Mrs. Yee was a grandmother—but I never met a more lively one—and Mrs. Ellen Li was the wife of Dr. Li Shu Pui (M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. Edin., director of the Hong Kong Sanatorium hospital and all the rest). They none of them spared my blushes.

Mrs. Li brought fuel to the flames of the women's rights campaign. 'It's all nonsense, this talk of men having to take concubines because their wives are infertile', she said. 'I was reading my husband's *B.M.J.* the other day and there was an article showing that in the majority of cases it is the men who are infertile. Most surprisingly it was written by a man.'

'I'll bet he never thought you would read it', said Auntie Vi. 'I'm surprised your husband didn't hide it. It's the men who say the women ought to go and be examined.'

'It's the men who ought to be examined', said Mrs. Li.

'Men!' said Mrs. Yee. 'Can't you see them doing it!'

Roars of laughter at the very idea. I felt very defenceless as the solitary male at such a party. They were extraordinarily kind and it was sad that as our stay was nearing its end we could not learn more about the old-fashioned ladies of Hong Kong by accepting the invitations they showered on us. But we did manage to get to tea with Mrs. Chan in her lovely house sufficiently far up the Peak to be out of the din but not too far to be out of the world.

She keeps open house and is interested in fostering young artists, and it was there that we met Mrs. Averil Tong, a well-known amateur actress. The stage is still in China considered the life of the rogue and vagabond, so Mrs. Tong's public performances are something of a novelty. It was delightful to watch her give two beautifully expressive mimes and dances in Mrs. Chan's drawing-room, accompanied by Mr. Tsu, who is a

magnificent soloist on the two-stringed A. Wu, a primitive-looking instrument which is held between the knees and played with a bow. He also produced soft melodies from a pipe, but best of all was his rendering of a traditional melody, the Down-fall of General Tsu, on the Pi Pa, a four-stringed instrument for which he keeps the nails of his right hand very long in order to pluck the strings more deftly.

I never enjoyed the results of a 'leg-pull' more than I did those of Mr. Lee.

CHAPTER TEN

Life in the Clouds

AMONGST THE MORE fascinating forms of literature for unplanned wet Sunday afternoons are the illustrated books of the era just before or just at the beginning of our own personal appearance on this planet. Hong Kong is well provided for in this category, for an enormous compendium called *Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong Kong, Shanghai and other Treaty Ports of China*, published in 1908, contains a wealth of portraiture of the moustachioed faces of the types of men who consolidated our position overseas, and the solid edifices they constructed. The book is rich in what is now reminiscent of a past age and much is of course out of date, but there are still passages in the article on Social Life which could be written today. It appears, however, that at that date the Chinese did not socially exist. They therefore had no Social Life, for beyond the expression 'Apart from the Chinese . . .' they are not once referred to. The article starts by dissipating an idea said to be prevalent in England that social distinctions are non-existent in the Colonies, and that in the presence of the stern realities of life all sorts and conditions of men are united in a common brotherhood, and stating that in a little community of 10 or 12 thousand

are produced all the characteristics of suburban life in England, intensified by peculiar local circumstances. As is, perhaps, only natural, each of the principal nationalities represented—British, German, Portuguese, Indian, and Japanese—resolved itself into a separate and distinct unit,

while Eurasians here, as elsewhere, hold a precarious position somewhere between the foreign and the native elements. The British community is divided into two main classes—official and mercantile—but these are capable of infinite multiplication. After all the more familiar methods of social distinction have been exhausted, and officers of the Army and Navy, civil servants, professional men, merchants, and large retailers, have grouped themselves into separate constellations, other and more ingenious devices are introduced to satisfy the desire for exclusiveness. Thus a man's exact position in the social scale is not infrequently determined by the altitude of his house. Generally speaking, it may be said that the higher he climbs up the side of the Peak the rarer becomes the social atmosphere which he breathes, and, as a consequence, between those who reside at the summit and those who live in the peninsula of Kowloon there is as wide a gulf as that which divided Dives and Lazarus. A club which welcomes with open arms a mercantile clerk—or rather 'assistant', as he becomes upon landing in Hong Kong—closes its doors resolutely against the head of a departmental store, and hence the existence of the Peak, Hong Kong, and St. George's Clubs.

For all this, the article goes on, 'life may be passed very pleasantly in Hong Kong', and it gives a long list of the various diversions of Social Life, both for 'those who move in "the upper circles"' and by those whose souls are untroubled by social aspirations'. (The Chinese, of course, do not come into either of these categories.)

For the rest, people are thrown upon their own resources. The prevailing character of the European residences is such as to allow of no excuse for inhospitality. The houses are commodious, and, although perched on the hillside, are almost invariably surrounded by gardens. Many of them also possess tennis courts. The difficulty of getting from one place to another, however, tends to restrict social intercourse. The gradients make carriages impossible—even the Governor is carried about in a chair by eight scarlet-clad coolies—and in these circumstances a call often partakes of the nature of an expedition.

Since those days the motor-car has done much to widen the possibilities of social intercourse, but the Period of the Peak has not yet entirely passed.

We often laugh at people who live 'in the clouds' or Cloud-Cuckoo-Land. On the other hand, Olympus was also cloud-bound. Perhaps thoughts of both categories of cloud dwellers may be legitimate in the case of some of those who inhabit the cloud-bound upper regions of the Peak at Hong Kong. The war has changed much of the snobbery of altitude and geographical location, and people of all sorts and conditions now think

themselves extremely lucky to get a house or a flat to themselves anywhere. Also, as one of the Older Brigade put it, 'Chinese are now *actually* allowed to live on the Peak', though few have taken advantage of this 'privilege'.

You may still be in the upper levels of Taipanery or even Government if you live on the Peak, and unless you are extremely energetic in your ascents and descents it must be very easy to lose touch with the rest of humanity from that height, but those who do live there seem to count the world well lost for a temperature at least four degrees cooler than down below, and cheerfully pay large electricity and fuel bills to keep their clothes and shoes from growing whiskers and themselves warm, all of which they could achieve for nothing lower down. Still there is undoubtedly a noticeable and invigorating freshness up in the clouds when down below there is only wilting heat.

It is a very different world up there. Here are no crowded streets, but mountain roads on a damp green hillside which you think may be uninhabited till a drifting bank of mist passes by and reveals very European-looking houses perched on pinnacles. The Peak is often liable to be more or less cloud-bound for eight months of the year and you can crawl your way to a friend's house in impenetrable fog to find when you leave it the most glorious views over bays and island-studded seas.

In some ways post-war conditions have brought the European community closer together, but in other respects Hong Kong is still very much a place of racial divisions and social cliques. That the Services in Hong Kong tend to be self-sufficient is perhaps not surprising, but even so it was rather revealing to have a letter from a Senior Naval Officer after a dinner party of 'mixed circles' in which he wrote, 'It is very refreshing to move into a different world and hear of things which, even close at hand, we have known nothing of'.

It is probably largely for economic reasons that there is incomplete contact between those who are employed in the big firms and Government officials, though one senior Government official remarked to me that while in a West African capital one might ask in a club who the owner of a strange face was and be told 'Oh, he's in a Bank or something', in Hong Kong the answer would be more likely to be 'Oh, he's something in Government, I believe'. There is, he said, an aristocracy of

business men rather than the more familiar one of the bureaucrats.

In Government circles, at any rate, there is considerably more reliance on a domestic existence than in many colonies, and an occasional visit to such an atmosphere was a welcome refreshment to a visitor. But there was always a feeling of being out of the world. Sometimes, sitting round a fire talking of old times with old friends, while children in dressing-gowns did their 'prep', it was merely a feeling of being in England, and it seemed strange that it only required half an hour's journey down the mountainside, with the lights of the city opening up like fairyland, to get back to Hong Kong. At other times, as one talked of Hong Kong's problems on a sunny day with the mist swirling round the Peak, one had a sensation of having mounted Olympus to discuss the problems of the troubled earth with the gods.

Jove himself, the ruler of Hong Kong, lived at a lower level in the sunshine just above the great city and at no distance from it. Government House had been rebuilt by the Japanese and they seemed to have done it well enough except for a meaningless ugly tower. Sir Alexander Grantham was a charming, easy host with a pleasant natural manner which made one feel quickly at home with him. The house had a greater air of magnificence than many a Government House, but it was there alone in Hong Kong that one had any real sense of being in a colony. The pattern of Government House dinners is the same all over the world. The Governor was, however, blessed with a most efficient A.D.C., who after dinner appeared to walk up and down the hall with a stop-watch. At precisely five-minute intervals there was a general post. It mattered not at what point in a sentence of a conversation, one was reft away. I had a sensation of having been torn from Lady Grantham just as she was going to disclose what European garden flowers do best in Hong Kong and was immediately substituted for a man who was listening to another lady. In fact she still had her mouth framed into an 'O' when she saw her partner had changed. It was too much for both of us and we were convulsed with laughter. We discussed the possibility of a new round game like consequences. She would go on talking about the races and I would discuss gardening. She was a delightful Dutch woman,

whom I had found at dinner most amusing on the ways of British officialdom. My other neighbour was the wife of the Colonel of the K.S.L.I. and he was my *vis-d-vis*, so Shropshire took up a lot of our conversation. Hong Kong and its other kinds of homes seemed particularly far away that evening.

Economic reasons also cause a gulf between the quite senior business world and the world of the Taipan. The Taipans are for the most part No. 1's in business firms. It is a name not lightly to be conjured with, and I have heard the wife of a senior member of a firm say scathingly 'He is *not* a Taipan' when a friend used the name in referring to another member of the firm. There is, too, something of the grandeur, the aristocratic manner, and benevolent entertaining of the lord of the manor expected of them, and again I have heard one who did not come up to standard described as 'a Taipan by name but not by nature'.

However unfortunate they are, cliques are common in many colonies and, human nature being what it is, they can probably never be entirely ironed out. If we allow that, we can understand the more easily the far more important lack of contact between the races. There are obviously more contacts of this kind in Hong Kong than there are in many other colonies, because facility of contact depends first of all on comparability of 'civilization' and the Chinese are the most civilized (from a European standard) of any race inhabiting colonial territories. Another thing that makes for ease of contact is the number of Chinese who are westernized.

Of the factors which work against increasing contact, difficulty of language is perhaps the greatest. There is, of course, prejudice. There always is in a mixed racial community, but it has also to be remembered that the Chinese standard of entertainment, due partly to the unfortunate importance of 'face', and perhaps even more to the fact that every Chinese is an innate gourmet and spends most of his money on expensive food, is very high. Many Europeans are entertained by wealthy Chinese but tend to avoid much of this because they cannot compete with it. As the wealthy Chinese are generally those who can most assimilate themselves to Western ways, intercourse with them is easier to the ordinary type of insular Englishman who takes no particular pleasure in things that are different.



‘Men and women in wide-brimmed hats follow the patient buffaloes through the mud, or move across the shining surface of the water-logged fields’ (p. 58)



Abbot with monks and nuns at a New Territories monastery.



Dinner at the monastery. Meals are all vegetarian



The garden of Aw Boon Haw, the Tiger Balm king, where concrete
‘animals, monsters, and fairies abound’ (p. 52)



Eucliffe at Repulse Bay, ‘one of the most famous extravaganzas in
Hong Kong—medieval castle complete with armour’ (p. 52)



At Man Kam To 'a bridge painted in the lucky vermilion joined British Territory to Chinese Territory' (p.287)



Main Street, Sha Tau Kok. 'The Bamboo Curtain, invisible, but very much there, runs down the middle of the road' (p. 64)

At the levels at which intercourse would be economically more possible and reciprocal, there are other difficulties on both sides which have to be overcome. Firstly, most middle-class Chinese are overcrowded. They have, as we have seen, large families in small flats and they are conscious that their home surroundings are less comfortable than those of Europeans of similar means. Being afflicted by 'face' they are shy of inviting strangers to their homes. On the other hand they are, although the father of the family may speak perfect English and be entirely 'western' in his office, probably very Chinese at home, and here the insularity of the English family holds them back.

It is, I think, at this level that one would like to see difficulties overcome, for both sides are missing such a lot. Contacts like this bring something very rich in intimacy and friendship with them. Though we were only two months in Hong Kong, there are people there whom I should be desperately sorry not to meet again.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Arts

THE GREAT DIFFERENCE between the Chinese theatre and the Western theatre seems to me to spring from the Chinese sense of realism. Life as it is lived must be treated in an absolutely realistic way. The Chinese requires diversion from it, just as the Westerner does, but his diversion must be utterly unrealistic. A play with us, even a play which is a fairy-tale, is presented as actual happening. With the Chinese play everything possible is done to ensure that you do not forget for a moment that you are watching something fantastic. 'The Chinese must see something unreal and traditional', Mr. Chan impressed upon us.

Although most of the audience are in their seats before the curtain goes up, they are there not from any sense of necessity for seeing the play all the way through, but as part of the way of spending an evening in diversion. There is a lot of coming and going throughout the performance, the price of seats is reduced

at half-time, and children come in free. You bring food, or you buy it (very good) from continually circulating attendants, you chew melon seeds and scatter the refuse cheerfully, you talk in loud tones, you take as much or as little notice as you like of what is going on on the stage. The children stand about in the aisles or sit on laps impassively gazing at the stage as though mesmerized by the colour, light and noise.

Indeed, it is easy to become mesmerized by the noise of the clashing cymbals and gongs. They punctuate every entrance and exit and almost every utterance of the actors. Strangest of all to Western eyes is the sight of the shirt-sleeved, perspiring orchestra sitting to one side of the stage, smoking and talking among themselves. And the stage hands, too, who wander in singlets and trousers on and off the stage during the scenes, bringing on a 'prop', or carefully arranging the heroine's dress when she sits down, or quietly placing a cushion on the stage just where, a moment or two later, she must fall on her knees.

The actors and actresses wear the gorgeous robes of ancient China, and the modernly dressed orchestra and the stage hands increase the air of unreality. The audience are never led to believe that the actor is not acting, nor do they lose themselves in the story: their interest is maintained by the skill of the actor in acting, and they like their well-known actors to conform to conventional rules of acting. Amongst the actors and actresses we met was the celebrated Mr. Ma Si-Tsang, one of the most famous stars of the Cantonese school. He had introduced a kind of tremolo into his voice at certain passages, but as this was not traditional there was considerable criticism of it.

The costumes have to be conventional also, and you know whether a man is a soldier or scholar, rich or poor, by the type of costume he is wearing. Rich young women, good or bad, dress in gloriously sequined jackets and long skirts, the hand-maid wears silk and sequined pyjamas, and the poor woman a plain blue blouse and black trousers.

Behind the scenes there are no dressing-rooms. The space back-stage is curtained off so that the leading actors and actresses may have separate cubicles, while the supers and small parts make up in very cramped and crowded conditions. The wonderful clothes and headdresses are hung on wires that run

from one end of the dressing space to the other. The stars have their own dressers and they provide their own costumes. Small-part players may be lent their clothes, or they can be hired for £25 a night. One of the signs of increasing stardom is the number of costumes an actor or actress possesses, and leading stars may own a theatrical wardrobe worth thousands of dollars.

Miss Hung Sin Nui, one of Hong Kong's leading actresses, had a wonderful array of dresses. She began her stage career at the age of 15, starting as a super, and learning by imitation, for there are no dramatic schools. Sometimes, of course, there is a family tradition of acting, and the father of Miss Pak Shit Sin, another leading lady, was a well-known actor. Miss Pak, who is 19, was having her hair dressed when we went behind the scenes. It is a most intricate and lengthy proceeding, and throughout the play, no matter what the scene may be, the elaborate coiffure of the actresses remains the same. In one scene Miss Pak had to undress and get into bed, but her hair remained perfectly dressed for a ball.

We also met Miss Yam Kim Fai, an attractive young woman who always plays the part of a young man. This is strange considering that until very recently girls' parts were taken by boys. Miss Yam's dresser was helping her to wind a long white stock round and round her neck, part of the conventional costume for a man. The Chinese make-up looks peculiar to Western eyes. Over a pale ochre foundation, white is painted all over the forehead and down the centre of the nose. Red is used on either side of the nose, all round the eyes, worked in down to just below the cheekbones and up to the hair on each side of the forehead. Eyes are extended and a slant upwards well pronounced by drawing a thick black line. Lips are reddened. There are conventions in make-up also. A villain must have a red mark on his forehead, or a straight red line drawn down between the eyes shows the wearer is sick. Miss Hung nearly missed her cue when talking to us. The call-boy came round calling out the Chinese equivalent of 'Overture and Beginners, please', and Miss Hung left to make her entrance, but she had to dash back, for she had forgotten to draw the red line between her eyes. Meanwhile the orchestra continued clashing cymbals to herald her entrance until she at last appeared, unruffled, perfectly poised, and with a chiffon handkerchief delicately held in her left hand.

A Chinese theatrical company usually numbers about a hundred, which includes orchestra and stage hands. The manager selects the actors and actresses. There are no agents, but there are associations to which a manager can apply. The cost of maintaining such a company is about £500 a night. The leading actor gets £90 or even £125. The orchestra gets £6 to £9 a night. Generally the actors and actresses play the same type of part and in a company there may be 20 playing young women, 10 old men, five comedians, and so on. Supers, minor actors and stage hands may be paid daily, weekly or monthly, while the 'stars' have shares in the profits. Thirty per cent of the takings go to the manager of the theatre, and 70 per cent to the company.

The stories of the plays are often historical and based on classics, but sometimes there are modern plays dressed in the costumes of the past. One such we saw was by Lei Ng O who lives in Hong Kong. The setting of the play was in Hong Kong and opened in a rice merchant's godown to which a Government official had come to inspect whether he was hoarding. The hero, played by Miss Yam Kim Fai, was a young man who had wasted a fortune. 'He' wore a simple black gown with a patch of blue and another of white pinned to the front to indicate that he was in rags. The merchant, his beautiful daughter, and the official wore brilliant and gorgeous robes. The boy and girl fell in love and had a number of adventures, but finally the merchant decided to marry his daughter to a rich neighbour's son. There was a great clashing of cymbals and striking of gongs and raised voices when all got together to argue out the matter, but the unwilling bride stood aloof, supported by her amah. For the moment she was taking no part, so in the usual Chinese way of acting she appeared to take no interest in what was going on around her, but turning her head to one side spat on the boards. While the attendant amah carefully trod the spit into the floor so that no one should slip up, the heroine, hearing her cue, burst into life and joined the general hullabaloo. The curtain fell, and the first part of the play was over after four hours. It was to be continued the following week.

A Chinese film also usually takes one into the world of fantasy. At a Wanchai cinema we spent two hours fascinated by a film that had begun some time before we arrived. The story was

confusing with an irate king, his two wives, and an unwanted baby. There were numerous fights, stabbings and stranglings. At one moment a fairy appeared to help the distressed heroine, at another the gods intervened during one of the fiercest battles. The climax came when after a terrific chase over boulder-strewn hills the hero with the unwanted baby in his arms fell over a precipice. At this point Chinese characters appeared on the screen, the lights went on, and everyone began to leave. You would have to come again next week to see the end of the story.

The cinema was packed with an enthusiastic audience who cheered every success of the hero and jeered the villains. The excitement was reminiscent of the response given to the old type of Wild West film.

Hong Kong has its own film studios. The Cantonese Film Company was first in the field and set up a studio some 20 years ago. There are now three film-producing companies and we visited the Yung Hwa or Perennially Brilliant Studio. This has been equipped from America and one of the senior members of the staff had been in Hollywood studying with 20th Century-Fox.

Most of the 'stars' come from Peking or Shanghai, as they must speak Mandarin because the films produced in this studio are in that dialect. 'Modern films', said the manager, 'are gaining in popularity and audiences like plenty of action. The Cantonese school of acting is old-fashioned compared with Shanghai, which has developed a technique more akin to the West.'

Hong Kong's cinema industry works under considerable difficulties today owing to the variations in ideological climate. It can hardly produce out-and-out Communist films in Hong Kong, and historical films are being banned in some places in China if the history does not conform with present-day ideas. Another difficulty is that censorship varies in its outlook from town to town. Films which will be acceptable in Hong Kong may have a very limited market in China today, but a company cannot live on the Hong Kong market.

Hong Kong likes Chinese and American films best. The cinemas showing Chinese films are always crowded and American films of the more extravagant kind are very popular.

There is something flamboyant in the outlook of the Westernized money-making Chinese to which the American way of life makes a strong appeal. British films are not popular, being considered generally far too slow, but *Hamlet* was an exception which went down well.

The Yung Hwa was making a great effort to produce purely Chinese plays which could yet have an appeal in the West, and we were shown two reels of *Sorrows of the Forbidden City* which I thought really beautiful and moving. It was a tale of the Empress Dowager and they had gone to a lot of trouble with their historical research to get it right. Films like this I felt might do a lot to bring a better understanding of China to the West. It was quick in action and the singing was not of the traditional Chinese kind, which to untrained Western ears is sure to sound like caterwauling with its high-pitched nasal sounds. Instead 'Golden Throat', the leading lady, had a lovely voice to which it was a pleasure to listen. It did not seem to matter that the talking and singing were all in Chinese. This film, we were told, is shortly to be exhibited in Europe, starting in France.

A very successful production in 1949 was *Dawn Must Come*, made by the South China Film Corporation, the principal scenes being taken in a studio in Kowloon and much of the location work filmed in the New Territories. The film showed the poverty in which numbers of people in China live and the way each has to help himself. Technically it was a great advance on former Cantonese productions.

An unusual diversion in Hong Kong, which can be likened in a slight way to a musically-supplied tea-room in the West, is the teashop with sing-song girls. You buy a ticket which provides you with a Chinese cup of tea, constantly refilled by a waiter with a kettle of boiling water, and a programme of the songs the girls will sing that afternoon. For the most part these places are patronized by men, who come in after their day's work. There is a male orchestra, but the main attractions are the slim young creatures, much made-up, who stand in turn before a microphone with one hand behind the back and the other holding the words of the song. With completely expressionless faces they sing for at least a quarter of an hour, and then retire to the end of the room while the next girl comes up to the platform. For a foreigner who knows no Chinese it is impossible

to judge if the song is gay or sad. They all sound miserable. Once when a girl began to sing in a more than usually squeaky voice, my companion exclaimed 'Ah! a female voice'. I asked what then had been the two who preceded her. 'They were impersonating male voices', he replied.

Many of the clients bring their pet birds with them, for the Chinese take out their birds for an airing, and there are wires strung across these tea-rooms for the purpose of allowing clients to hang up their cages. The programmes print the complete text of the songs and the teashop patrons follow this assiduously. You see all the heads lift as the singer reaches the foot of a column and starts the next—for of course Chinese is written in vertical lines.

The deplorable fact that a city of the size and wealth of Hong Kong has no concert-hall shows the lack of interest taken in Western cultural activities. Nevertheless there are the Stage Club, the Hong Kong Chamber Music Club, the Hong Kong Singers, the oldest musical society, and the Sino-British orchestra, and various other dramatic and musical societies, to all of which Hong Kong owes a great deal, for they endeavour to foster music and the drama in spite of difficulties such as finding places in which to practise and perform. Indeed the community is not yet sufficiently alive to the importance of supporting them. It is hardly conceivable that a colony of any Power except Britain could show such indifference to culture.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Religion

TO ONE who is used to the more or less tidy compartments of religion in the West, and on that analogy has little difficulty in finding his way about Islam, or even Hinduism, the question of what a man's religion is in China is at first rather confusing. One is generally told that there are three religions in China: Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism, but one soon finds that more often than not a man cannot be labelled as belonging to

one or the other, but may very well have in his make-up beliefs attributable to all three.

Treatises on Taoism, Confucianism or Buddhism are easily enough available, but anyone with an inquiring turn of mind will feel as frustrated as I did by the difficulty of discovering how the many things of a plainly religious character fit in.

One of the first things I noticed was a little shrine at the threshold of almost every shop. There you will see either a wooden tablet painted with a few characters in gold, or perhaps just a piece of paper with the characters printed on it. Before it is some small vessel with joss-sticks. Joss-sticks are always burnt in threes, and candles, so much used in temples, in pairs.

This is the shrine of the Land God, To Tei, one of the most popular gods. He sits at the door of your house to protect it. In the New Territories a larger edition of him is always to be found at the entrance to a village, and generally he is represented by a smooth stone, though sometimes in idol form. Every death of an adult in the village has to be promptly reported to him and he is often asked to protect children. Their names are written on a piece of red paper which is placed in his shrine with food, wine and incense.

To Tei is generally said to be Taoist, and as Taoism is a philosophy of nature in which man takes his place as part of the landscape with the rocks, the trees, the animals and birds and butterflies, the conception of To Tei fits into the picture well enough. I felt, however, that To Tei, like so many other features of Chinese religion, was something older than any philosopher's creed and belonged in fact to the religion of man's infancy, the almost instinctive beliefs with which primitive man is endowed.

Another god who is common to almost every Chinese home is Tso Kwan, the Kitchen God. His shrine is usually in a niche near the stove, represented by golden characters on a red tablet. He is considered to be fat and jovial as a result of good living, but is of great importance because once a year he visits the other gods to report on the behaviour of all the members of the household. Before he sets out on New Year's Eve the family regale him with a feast when large quantities of honey are given to him. This is to try and seal his lips or at least to make him utter only honeyed words. Crackers are fired to drive away demons, and on his return four days later he is welcomed with

an abundance of good things. His tablet or picture is reinstated with bowings and the burning of incense.

Getting faded, worn and tattered as the year goes by, but renewed when the New Year comes along, there are to be found on many of Hong Kong's double doors the pictures of Ngai Ching and Wat Yun, the Door Gods. The former was a military man, the latter a civilian, and according to legend the Emperor Tai Tsung on being taken ill declared he was afraid to remain alone at night because of the demons, so these two offered to be his guardians. To commemorate this the Emperor had their portraits elaborately coloured and pasted on to the palace doors to ward off evil spirits.

Another very popular god is Kwan Tai, the God of War. He is particularly popular because he does not want to wage war but to prevent it. In A.D. 170, during his life on earth, Kwan Tai and three others took an oath to live or die together fighting the Yellow Turban rebels who brought about the overthrow of the Han dynasty. During the Tai Ping rebellion a vision of



The shrine of the Land God at the entrance to the village

Kwan Tai, wearing a glittering helmet and with a fierce aspect, led armed hosts to the support of a city threatened by the rebels, who were so terrified that they fled. Kwan Tai was awarded the title of Kwan—the Sage—by the Manchus as a token of gratitude. Kwan Tai also symbolizes loyalty. He is therefore found as the patron of thieves and smugglers (to prevent their betraying one another), and because he wards off war, carpenters keep him in their shops lest any of them use the tools as weapons.

These are the gods most commonly to be found in shops and homes, but there are many others. We were told there is 'a god of almost anything—of the kitchen, of the land, of the water, of lavatories, and of keeping babies from falling off chamber-pots'!

Many Europeans buy figures as ornaments not knowing them to be gods, and about the most familiar of them are Lao Sze Shin, the god of longevity, with an amusingly elongated skull and usually represented holding an almond, symbol of long life, and the god of literature, Yuen Chong. He stands with one foot on the head of a monster (ignorance) and holds a pen in his outstretched hand. Others of this category are Chu Pat Kwai, the pig-faced god, who symbolizes man's struggle with his conscience. Chu was banished to earth for drinking to excess and by mistake entered the body of a sow. He went with a Buddhist saint to India to fetch the sacred books of Buddhism and was rewarded by admission to paradise. Shun Hang Che, the monkey god, remarkable for his ingenuity, also went to India for the sacred books and was similarly allowed into paradise on his return. Sha Chang, the black-faced one, acted as baggage carrier on the journey to India for the Buddhist books. He is regarded as symbolizing the weakness of human character.

Few who buy these and other figures will fail to succumb to the charming goddess of compassion, Kwan Yin or Koon Yam. Originally a male Buddhist deity, she was adopted in the gentler guise by China. The symbol of all that is good and pure and holy, she is also the model of womanly beauty. She was the daughter of a king, and wearying of court life wished to enter a nunnery. But her father wanted her to marry and when she fled to the nuns he ordered that her life should be made as hard as possible. The Superior gave her the most menial tasks to perform but the gods pitied her and helped her in her work. Her father, in punishment for his wickedness, was afflicted with

a skin disease which ate away his flesh. Kwan Yin cut parts from her own body and sent them to him to cure his illness, and for this she was canonized and called 'The very merciful' and 'Saviour of the afflicted'.

Pak Tai, god of the sea, is much revered by the fisher-folk, but in particular they honour Tien How, the Queen of Heaven, who has much in common with Kwan Yin. Both save from peril, especially at sea, both are protectors of mothers and children, and both are beneficent and merciful. Tien How, however, is above all a sea goddess and her shrines are to be found in every fishing village.

A great many of the temples of Hong Kong are in a sadly uncared-for condition. To some extent this is accountable for by the growing neglect of the old gods, but the mercenary manner of their administration has to take a large share of the blame. The keepers bid for their jobs from the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs and the highest bidder gets the job. The proceeds go to good works. This is all right as far as it goes and few Chinese complain. The keeper, however, is there to make money out of his contract and does it by selling papers, candles, 'fortunes', and so on. He is more often than not a man completely ignorant and rarely knows even the names of the gods in the temple, let alone anything about them. In many temples dust lies thick, but others, like the fishermen's temples, though they may be shabby, are very much 'alive'.

I watched one day a mother with her child at a temple. She was a young woman, poor, but neatly dressed with her hair plaited round her head, and she led her small sick son, whose recovery she sought, into the temple by his hand. She knelt in front of the shrine and carefully sorted out the papers she had bought. Holding them in her hands, pressed together as in prayer, she shook them up and down and made the boy do the same. Then she took up the two pieces of rounded wood with which one finds the gods' answer to questions. Her lips moved in earnest prayer for several moments and then she dropped the wood to discover the outcome of her petition. The child stood quietly by, silent and apathetic.

Then taking each paper offering in turn, she passed them over his head several times, wrapped them together, lit them at an oil lamp, raised and lowered the burning papers several times

before the gods, and then put them into a brazier. Finally she helped the child to raise his hands in prayer once more and led him away.

It was a moving scene, with such evident faith. Tsing, the driver, was watching with us. 'My mother make me pray when like child,' he said, 'now no believe.' Tsing, like so many, had no beliefs.

We saw none of the big Chinese festivals while we were in Hong Kong except the Ching Ming, the festival of the tombs, which was the only one to take place during our visit. The digging up of bones and the placing of them in the earthenware jars which are such a common sight on the hillsides in the New Territories take place at this festival, and it was an astonishing sight. The families concerned brought the bones of their departed in baskets to a cement-surfaced yard. Here they were all tenderly washed, counted, and laid out in the order in which they appear on a skeleton, with the skull at the top and the bones of the toes at the bottom. When all is correct, they are placed in the jars, feet first and skull on top, and—if no permanent grave can yet be built—left on the hillsides.

My main impression of Ching Ming was that it was a family reunion. There seemed somehow an unwillingness to accept death and separation. People came to the graves with crackers and paper offerings and food, in some cases they carried whole roasted pigs. All this was offered to the dead and the family then sat and ate the food as it were in communion with the departed. It was not at all a sad festival. There seemed a lot of quiet happiness. Ching Ming is considered the Chinese equivalent of Easter, the vernal equinox.

In the matter of ancestor-worship there was much to remind me of Africa. Up in the Northern Gold Coast it is the basic religion. Near each family compound is built a little hut, with door and all, in which the family spirits dwell and the living still have intercourse with them. If the Chinese do not do precisely the same, it is worth recounting that on our way out to Hong Kong we saw at Bangkok decorative little houses on posts, like nesting boxes for birds, in many gardens. You could buy them at any of the many potters, and the Siamese lady who was accompanying us told us they were houses for the family spirits. The Chinese are really doing much the same—in a more advanced way—with their ancestral temples, where the ancestors

are represented by tablets in green and gold or red and gold, and family altars are generally to be found in a Chinese home. A Chinese friend thought that one of the reasons why Christianity made such a strong appeal to Chinese was its emphasis on the Fatherhood of God and on Jesus Christ as the Elder Brother. This, he said, made an immediate appeal to the family instinct.

Nature worship, the spirits to be found at rocks and pools and in trees, must also in China long antedate the philosophers. Fung Shui (Wind Water), which so closely affects the lives and graves of all, as we shall see, is surely closely connected with nature worship, and the Fung Shui groves of China have their counterpart in the fetish groves of West Africa. In China as in West Africa special attention is paid to the friendly trees near houses which give shade. The wild trees of the forest and woodland are more dubious characters. There is fear in the forest.

One general similarity between the animists of China and those of Africa is the tolerance of both to other faiths. It amounts, indeed, to something more than tolerance, for it is an acceptance of the fact that they may be as good or possibly even better. Chinese fathers do not seem to insist on their children following in their footsteps, and I know several families in which different faiths are practised between members of the same or different generations.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Chinese Food and Chinese Medicine

YEARS AGO in Mukalla on the South Arabian coast I sometimes walked into the Customs godown in which dried fish was kept pending export. There were always quantities of large filleted fish of various varieties lying as dry and hard as planks of wood, though never quite so odourless. Amongst them was a great deal of dried shark and in a corner there would be a large pile of discarded triangular fins. I inquired what was done with them.

‘They are sent to China, your honour. I ask pardon of God and your honour for mentioning it, but it is said the Chinese eat many abominable things which are not lawful to be eaten.’

I thought back to those few exiled Chinese in Pemba who used to collect sea-slugs, and the Mauritian *boutique chinoise* with its so-called hundred-year-old eggs, and there came to me again an old vision of epicurean mandarins in gorgeous robes embroidered with peacock feathers, hats with buttons, elegant fans, and yard-long drooping moustachios, daintily lifting morsels of birds' nests, sharks' fins, sea-slugs and other delicacies to their aristocratic lips with ivory chopsticks.

Now, in Hong Kong, as I walked with the estimable Mr. Chan along the arcaded pavements of Queen's Road West, I saw in the food shops those familiar triangular fins. There they were, large and small, just as they had been in Mukalla, and I felt sure that at least some of them must have come from that very godown.

Mr. Chan, ever anxious to eradicate false impressions, told me that one did not buy one of these triangles to make shark's fin soup, but a neat packet of stuff which looked like gelatinous macaroni, wrapped in cellulose, and with a colourful label describing the contents as best shark's fin manufactured in Hong Kong. And so he took us to a friend, the owner of a sharks' fin factory and also of a restaurant well known to the connoisseur of sea delicacies. Yin Yeng Ki, with his closely cropped head, benevolent round face, and well-filled pyjamas, was a good advertisement for the nutritive value of the fins.

His factory was in the dim upper regions of a back alley. The atmosphere was a combination of old-fashioned washhouse and boiling glue. It was hot and humid, and we paddled about in puddles of hot water. The fins are soaked overnight and then placed in boiling water for 20 minutes, after which the skin is scraped off them. This looked a rather messy process. A man with a very sharp knife sliced off the layers of meat from both sides of the fanlike bones: the work needs skill, because there is not much meat and the bigger the slice the better the quality. The bones are afterwards sold as fertilizers. The slices of meat are then pulled or cut into thin strips, boiled for a few minutes and dried with a hand-operated press. The damp strips are packed tightly into a square frame, and the frames laid on mat trays and placed on bamboo shelves under which sulphur is burnt to bleach them white. After this they are dried on the roof and are ready for packing.

It was a strange world, on the roof-tops where they dried the fins. There was something familiar about it, for it recalled drying grounds one sees all over the tropics, here for cloves or copra, there tobacco, or coffee, or cocoa. Just as if it had been on the ground, dogs wandered about and there was dry ordure, human and canine, as there would have been anywhere else. It is just as well all these things we eat from the tropics go through a lot more stages before we consume them! None of the space was wasted. A neighbouring roof had strips of pigskin hanging from lines. It is put into oil afterwards to soften it and is said to make excellent food.

There are about thirty of these sharks' fin factories in Hong Kong. In Yin's factory the employees were mostly apprentices earning £5 a month plus food and lodging. They slept where they worked, and each boy had his towel hanging on a hook on the wall, with a tube of toothpaste and soap-box perched on top. The boys had a very steamed and bleached appearance.

Many countries provide fins for the famous soup: Ceylon, Burma, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Korea, Norway, Cuba, Indonesia, South America, East Africa, West Africa, North Borneo, French Indo-China, Macao, Iran. When you come to think of it shark's fin soup and other shark products take quite a toll of these unpleasant beasts.

At Yin's restaurant we sat in his private balcony room overlooking the café. This arrangement is common in Hong Kong shops and enables the proprietor to be simultaneously in the middle of his family and at his business. The cook was introduced and we were given a recipe for the soup. Put a packet of fins in boiling water and soak until soft, then drain. Put five ounces of lard into a frying-pan and when melted add two ounces of crushed ginger, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of sliced onion, and the fins, then fry for about 10 minutes. Add sufficient cold water to cover (a Chinese frying-pan is deeper than ours) and boil for 10 to 15 minutes. Take out and drain. Serve with chicken or meat broth. This last is very important because sharks' fins are quite tasteless by themselves and must be served in a good broth.

No Chinese dinner-party is complete without this soup, for with it the dinner proper begins; the courses before the soup are merely appetizers. In the arrangement of menus, as in so many other things, the Chinese go the opposite way to us, for after the

preliminary courses, which may include sea foods or salads, and the shark's fin soup, you have meat or poultry, or both, then fish, then another soup, and sometimes end up with a sweet dish. There are very definite preferences in the choice of meat and poultry. Pork is No. 1 choice, then beef, with mutton (at any rate among the Cantonese) as a bad last. The smell of mutton is so disliked by some Chinese that they just cannot eat it. Our local butcher at home got so used to our ringing up to ask for beef at the week-end when expecting Chinese friends, that he used to ring first to inquire 'Have you any Chinese visitors?' before sending the ration. As for poultry, the Chinese consider chicken the best, then wild duck, duck, goose, and turkey a bad last.

There is a wide variety of restaurants to choose from, small, not so small, and luxury, and the prices naturally vary. At lunch time they are always crowded, mainly with men. For this meal the snack is as popular in Hong Kong as it is in England, and the cafeteria system is reversed. Instead of the customer moving along with a tray choosing dishes, a number of waiters and waitresses move continually between the tables bearing trays with an assortment of delicious-looking hot or cold snacks. The choice is so varied, and the dishes so tasty, that you can quickly eat your fill and find yourself with a very expensive bill at the end of the meal.

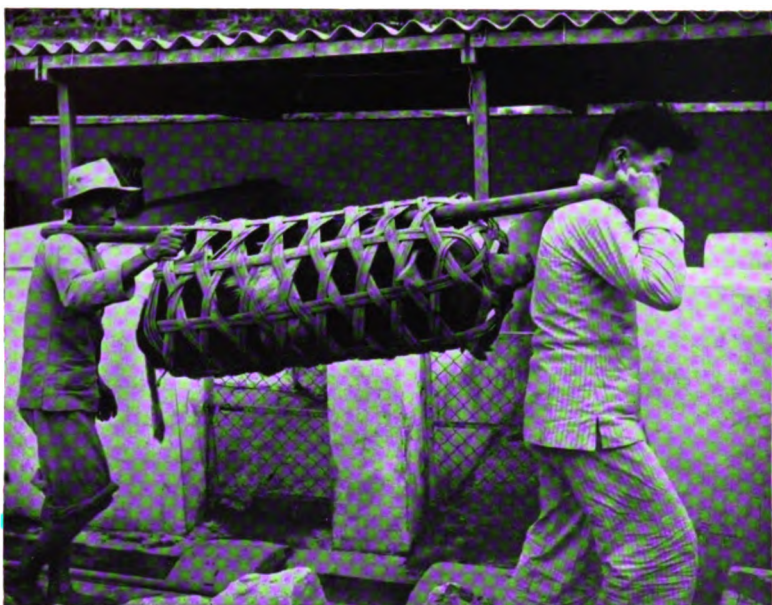
The prospect of chopsticks is not nearly so formidable as some people believe. With a little perseverance quite enough food can be conveyed to the mouth, and the charming, attentive little waitress will be delighted to instruct you in their use. She will even, if you cannot, or pretend you cannot, manage them, feed you herself. All you will have to do is sit like a nestling thrush with your maw well open while she pops in each nicely seasoned mouthful in the most maternal way. My observation is that this method does not appeal nearly so much to the female nestling as it does to the male, and, curiously, it also does not appeal to her to see her male belongings so nurtured. In these cases, if the self-help approach is by shyness or for other reason ruled out, it is quite possible to ask for a knife and fork.

In private homes we sampled dinner-party food and family meals. Both were equally well cooked and served but there were fewer dishes at the latter. The Chinese custom, like the Arab,



‘Wherever the gradient is sufficiently short of the perpendicular to enable a hut to perch are squatter settlements’ (p. 76)

PLATE XVII



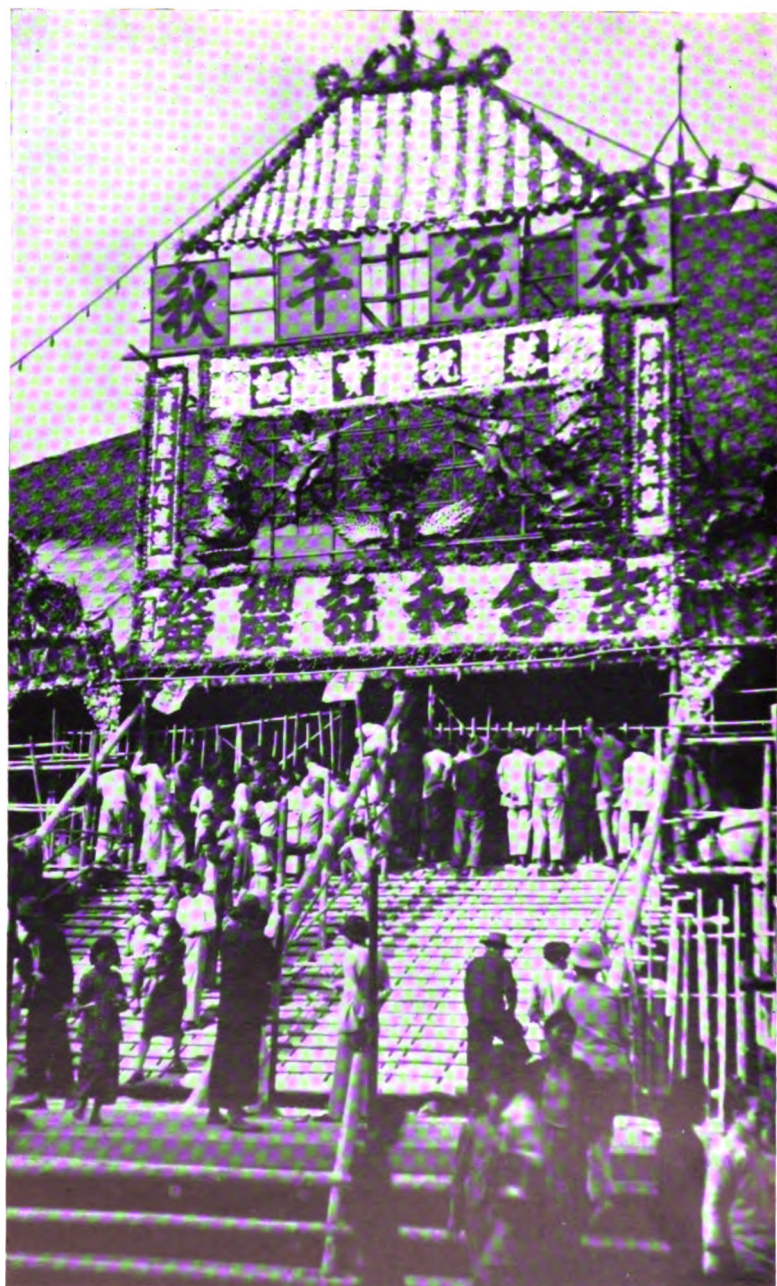
Above: Coolies carry pigs in baskets on bamboo poles. *Below:* Sway-back pigs are being straightened up by crossing with Berkshires. 'More comfortable for the pigs but not so good to eat' (p. 176)





Above: 'You will notice on many a hillside large earthenware jars. Each one contains human bones' (p.57). *Below:* 'At the Ching Ming Festival bones are tenderly washed and counted' (p. 128)





This matched theatre was erected in Kowloon for the Birthday Festival of Kwan Yin

seems to be to talk a long time before dinner and then to dine and go home. One Chinese friend told me that Europeans could be very tiresome by turning up late, and then keeping everybody out of bed for an unconscionable time after dinner. Another Chinese custom requires that the dining-table shall be round because of its greater intimacy. Now a large round table takes up too much room in a small dining- or sitting-room, so the difficulty is overcome by having a small square table with a large folding round top. The local carpenters have not been long in devising ways of making furniture suitable to overcrowded conditions. Besides the separate table-tops, we saw meat safes that were also tables.

At one small dinner-party in a flat, dinner began with hors-d'œuvre of cold meats, cold fish, prawns and vegetables. After the shark's fin soup came roast chicken, meat pasties, fried fish, an indeterminate dish which that painstaking educator Mr. Chung, who was one of the guests, described simply as 'entrails', chicken again, roast duck, boiled fish, and a sweet soup of lotus seeds eaten with dumplings stuffed with beans and peas. The Chinese seem to share the Arab idea that bits and pieces like this do not constitute a meal, for having thought it *must* be over with the sweet things, we were confronted with rice and a hot-pot of all sorts of good but unexplained things. After this, as the diary says, 'It was pleasant to relax in an armchair'.

Each one of these items constitutes a separate course, and one of the main differences between a party like this and a family meal is that at the latter all the food is put on the table at once. Also the *base* of a family meal is always either rice or noodles, with several dishes of either meat or fish or vegetables to go with it.

The number of people engaged in producing, preparing or distributing food is quite extraordinary: the fisher-folk and the farmers, the proprietors of restaurants, food shops, market stalls and cooked-food stalls, and the hawkers of food to be met everywhere. Markets are crowded with housewives who are usually very careful to spend their money wisely, and when they want chicken, for example, they do not have to buy a whole bird but can take just a wing or a leg. So many of Hong Kong's millions have to be very careful over their family budgets, but however poor they never seem so under-nourished as, for

instance, desert Arabs. The Chinese achieve a more balanced diet and they appreciate fresh, green vegetables and good cooking. In markets where the poorest people do their shopping you will find cuttle-fish from Korea, popular because they swell a lot in cooking and need much chewing, bean sprouts of surprising length, grown in tanks and weighing very light so that you get plenty for your money, and very tiny salted fish, which also weigh light, and all these are cheap and nourishing foods.

But it is in the actual cooking of food that the Chinese excel. Everything must be absolutely fresh and vegetables never overcooked so that they lose their crispness. Frying each ingredient separately before cooking the whole dish is another essential, and so is the use of tasty seasonings such as soya-bean sauce, peanut oil, ginger, bean curd, rice wine, and many others.

Something should be said of the more peculiar dishes of Chinese cuisine. Lest I may be accused of extravagance in my statements by Western readers, I should say that I took every possible care to confirm what was told me. The Chinese cook certainly has the widest variety of material. 'I think we eat almost everything except earthworms', said one of my informants. 'We do eat rice-worms, small worms found in the wet rice-fields at harvest time. Beetles? Yes, certainly. Some beetles dried and salted are very good and crisp.'

The aged eggs of Western jokes are there, but they are not all that old and they are extremely good. They are fresh eggs salted or coated with ashes and salt for 20 days, or coated with lime and clay. Rats, cats, dogs, and so on, all add to the repertoire. 'Chow' is pidgin for food and the dogs we know as chows are so called because they are good to eat. We saw a lot of them in Hong Kong, but selling dog-meat for food is not allowed. Snakes were out of season when we were there: they are a winter dish and good for sufferers from rheumatism. One snake dish is known as the 'meeting of the three'; it consists of a cobra, a krait, and another species with which I was not familiar. You see them alive on sale in cages and the three cost 7s. 6d., but this does not include the gall-bladders, which are highly prized in medicine and sold separately.

Two dishes I could certainly never have faced: in Kwangtung monkey's brain is considered a special dish with valuable properties. The top of the skull of the live monkey is sliced off and

the brains picked out with chopsticks. And elsewhere people eat alive newly born field-mice served in soy sauce. I should not record these dishes were it not that Chinese friends have vouched for them.

In Hong Kong there are two advanced systems of living side by side, and although with the passage of years the one has borrowed much from the other, they are still poles apart. To the visitor this was evident in the contrast of Chinese-type restaurants and European-type, of Chinese-type shops and European, and in many other ways. One of the contrasts that struck me most was that between Chinese-type druggists and Western chemists.

There was about the former an air of eighteenth-century English pharmacies, an air which survives in the jars of coloured water, decorative jars, and solid dark cabinets still to be found in some chemists' shops. But here in Hong Kong, as in England, the age of the patent medicine has done much to alter things, and there were plenty of shops with European and American patent medicines on one side and Chinese medicines on the other. At first I suspected these to be survivals of herbalists' shops, but closer acquaintance showed they contained much more like the stock-in-trade of the African medicine-man. The difference lies principally in the wrapping. The Chinese druggist uses tissue-paper and good-looking containers, the African medicine-man uses leaves or some old matting bag.

Until recently Chinese medicine had almost an official existence in Hong Kong, parallel to European, just like the restaurants. The Tung Wah group of hospitals recognized and used the system to the full. But that citadel has been assailed. Such Chinese medicine as is practised in the hospitals is now on a very minor scale and no sort of recognition is allowed to the Chinese druggist. In China his qualifications have for some time been protected by law and, I am told, there are few 'quacks'. In Hong Kong the quack in Chinese medicine flourishes. None the less, Western medicine is also very greatly resorted to, but Chinese tolerance likes to have the two—just in case. I was interested to meet Chinese medical practitioners with Western qualifications who held that in some respects the Chinese system was superior, and I found Europeans who resorted to Chinese medicine for some complaints. On the whole, what

seems to have happened is that Chinese medicine has remained static. So old is it that at one time it was much in advance of Western medicine, but there is no need for a layman to do more than compare a Chinese anatomical chart with a Western one in order to realize that in medicine Chinese science has stood still.

But obviously there is 'something in it'.

We were invited one day to the consulting-room of one of the best-known practitioners in Chinese medicine in Hong Kong, Dr. C. F. Lo. From the noise and bustle of Queen's Road we climbed up a narrow flight of stairs to his waiting-room, furnished with a counter and benches. A vase of gladioli stood on a table and the room had an air of Victorian middle-class respectability. I was told that a fashionable Chinese doctor gets \$3 for a visit and that he probably sees about 50 patients a day. It seemed quite likely, for a considerable number collected while we were with Dr. Lo. Partitioned off from the waiting-room was a small office, and behind it the consulting-room with a sofa, chairs and tables. It was here Dr. Lo received us and gave us cups of tea. He wore a grey robe and had a long, full face with roguish eyes which seemed to be saying 'What a joke life is!' He looked older than the 43 years he admitted. Extremely amiable and a good conversationalist, he would have been more convincing if it had not been for those amused eyes.

'The Chinese', he said, by way of introduction, 'have a belief in Chinese medicine, which is like a belief in religion.'

Dr. Lo had matriculated at Queen's College, whence the foundation of the good English he spoke, and had then studied medicine with his father, a well-known herbalist, for four years. He had been made to read a great deal, including the *Book of the Internal*, written 3,000 years ago. He had lectures from his father and watched him with his patients, then for three years he practised with him, learning to diagnose and prescribe. After that he worked with another doctor and finally took an examination, received a diploma, and became a professor at the Canton Academy of Medicine which was founded 20 years ago. Until the Tung Wah Hospital had had to give up Chinese medicine, Dr. Lo had been an adviser there.

There are two kinds of Chinese doctors, explained Lo, 'internal' and 'external', roughly corresponding to the medical

and surgical divisions. 'Chinese books on medicine are legion and anyone can learn to be a doctor.' Few instruments are used, but there must be a pestle and mortar for grinding ingredients, a chopper for the herbs, and needles of various sizes. With these needles most ills can be diagnosed and cured. For instance, if the nose is bleeding, a needle prick near the thumb-nail stops it because the vein there is connected to the lung and the lung to the nose.

'European doctors', went on Lo, 'only use the pulse to see whether the patient is in good or bad health. The Chinese have 24 different diagnoses from the pulse.' He showed us the *History of Chinese Medicine*, which described the various pulse beats, and among them was 'scattered, large, irregular, like willow flowers scattering with the wind'.

On seeing a patient, therefore, Dr. Lo first feels the pulse. Then he looks in the eye. If the pupil is not the right colour something is wrong with the kidneys. If the iris, then the liver is out of order. The white indicates the lungs, and the red rim the heart, while the eyelid shows the state of the spleen.

Then he studies the patient's face. The left cheek indicates the state of the liver; the right cheek and the nose, the lungs; the upper lip and the ears, the kidneys; the forehead, the heart, and all round the mouth, the spleen and kidneys. 'The kidneys', Lo explained, 'are tied up with the nerves and the brain through the spinal cord.' He notices the colour of the skin also, and the look in the patient's eye. 'A hot temper shows something wrong with the liver, so we give a soothing medicine for the liver, which also means soothing the nerves.'

There are certain complaints—such as injuries, diphtheria, typhoid and typhus—with which Dr. Lo does not deal, but sends his patients to Western doctors. 'I can cure them,' he assured us, 'but I understand the danger of infection and that the patients must be quarantined.' But he can cure appendicitis. A Frenchman living in Hong Kong was told by a European doctor that he must be operated on at once for appendicitis. The Frenchman insisted he could not go into hospital for a month as he had to sign an important business agreement. So he called in Dr. Lo, who prescribed for him and he was speedily cured.

'For long', said Dr. Lo, 'I have pondered as to why an ointment rubbed on the surface of the skin can effect an internal

cure. I have reasoned that it should be possible to produce oil vapours with electricity. I will have an enclosed room. The patient will enter nude and stand for the prescribed time while oil vapours are concentrated on the body. He will then come out cured. My Magic Box,' he went on, 'through which I shall become famous.'

Breaking off to see his patients, Dr. Lo took us later to have a close inspection of a Chinese druggist. Many patients came and went as we stood behind the counter. They brought their prescriptions, and the dispensers opened drawers in the tall cabinets and took out the various ingredients. Each was carefully weighed, then wrapped up separately and Chinese characters swiftly painted on the paper covering to explain the dose and method of using it. There were dried jasmine flowers to soothe a baby, bone from a monkey or deer to be boiled in water and drunk as a tonic, yellow sulphur to eat as a stimulant, rhinoceros skin for purifying the blood. There was the gallstone of an ox for curing phlegm, which could also be cured by dried monkey glands, but they were expensive and cost 25s. to 35s. apiece.

Rhinoceros horn brings down a temperature, for a rhinoceros likes water and therefore has a cooling effect. A piece of dried snake, also expensive for it costs 1s. 9d. for little more than an ounce, will cure rheumatism, for the snake moves quickly and will help you to do so also. The bile of a cobra or banded krait mixed with orange-peel is particularly efficacious for curing dizziness or faintness, and the horn of an antelope will soothe the nerves.

For the rich man there are all sorts of highly priced remedies. The bones of a tiger, for rheumatism, cost 15s. for 1½ ounces, a fungus that grows up where the milk from a tigress drops on the ground is a tonic for T.B. and costs £1 for 1½ ounces. Sea-horses for glands are also expensive, and so are powdered pearls used to beautify the face and soothe the nerves. Then there is the fungus that grows on the inner wood of a coffin, opposite the nose and mouth of the corpse. This makes a curative soup. And the tail of a deer, which costs £6 to £15 for 1½ ounces, is used for the kidneys. 'A nobleman's medicine,' said Dr. Lo, 'but I can prescribe beef or some other cheaper ingredient for a poor man which will be almost as efficacious.'

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Industry

INDUSTRY in the broad sense is one of the first words one associates with Hong Kong. The Cantonese are constantly, cheerfully and noisily busy day and night, hammering cigarette tins into kitchen utensils at street corners, loading and off-loading junks and lorries on the waterfront, carving mahjong sets or painting spots on them late at night, or treadling sewing-machines as fast as they can go. One gets a feeling that if there had not been industries (in the particular sense) they would have had to be invented for Hong Kong alone.

In 1947 a well-informed article in an American journal said: 'Hong Kong means trade. Apart from the British-American Tobacco Company, a few small textile, joss-stick and rubber-shoe factories, and the like, there are no manufacturing companies of more than local importance.' Trade still comes first in Hong Kong's economy, but industry in 1950 was running it a close second. The development of the industries in the last two or three years has been dramatic.

One of the oldest factories is the last surviving water-mill just outside Kowloon. The two wheels have been revolving for a hundred years. They give the power to a great wooden pestle which pounds up the herbs and sandalwood used for making joss-sticks. Some at least of the joss-stick factories must be as old as this water-mill. We visited one at Shau Ki Wan which was just a room opening on to the street. A curious, rather sickly smell filled the air, and the four or five lads working there were covered with fine yellow dust. Manufacture is a simple process. A bunch of sticks is dipped in water and then rolled in the powder, which is spread out thickly on a shelf. When the sticks are dry the process is repeated until there is a sufficiently thick coat of powder on each stick. They are then placed in a barrel and shaken from side to side to smooth out the incense evenly, and the last stage is to dip the handles of the sticks into the lucky red paint.

The oldest industry to export its wares to Europe is undoubtedly the preserved ginger industry, which has a really

romantic story behind it, linking England and Hong Kong in pleasant fashion.

Long ago, probably at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there lived in the city of Canton a poor hawker of food-stuffs named Li Chy. There were many such in Canton, for then, as now, many of the poorer people bought their cooked food from hawkers. But Li Chy had imagination. He noticed that whereas his compatriots did not like sweet things, every one of the strange foreign devils who lived outside the city had a very sweet tooth. So he started making sweetmeats and selling them at a corner near the foreign factories. He soon had quite a number of customers and exercised his ingenuity in making fresh varieties. One day he tried boiling ginger in syrup. Kwangtung province grows a lot of ginger and supplies were easy.

One of his English customers bought some. He liked it so much that when faced with the usual problem of what to take home as presents he decided on preserved ginger, and ordered a large quantity from Li Chy. The presents were a great success. Everybody wanted more and lots more orders were given to Li Chy, who had to start a factory to cope with them.

Chy had to enlarge his business and asked two of his friends, Sung and Ip, to become partners. In 1821 they built a factory which was called Chy Loong, Loong meaning Prosperous. And prosperous the factory was. In 1846 it moved to Hong Kong, where there were more of the sweet-toothed devils than there were in Canton. Then, so the story goes, someone gave some to Queen Victoria and she liked it so much that she gave orders that preserved ginger was to appear as dessert at every banquet!

Queen Victoria's enthusiasm for preserved ginger was unabated. She suggested the 'Cock' brand as Chy Loong's trademark. It was registered in London in 1851. Foreign courts fell victims to the habit and soon it was the fashion in all the capitals of Europe to serve Chy Loong ginger at any party which was a party. The industry grew and grew till it reached a turnover of six million dollars a year. Other factories started up, but they never caught up with the lead of Chy Loong. By 1938 there were eleven firms in the preserved-ginger business, with dates of establishment varying from 1840 to 1915. In that year

Mr. U Tat Chee, the 'Ginger King', formed a syndicate to bring them together, regulate exports, improve quality and standardize prices. In 1949 Hong Kong exported 5,260 tons of ginger, of which 4,340 tons went to the United Kingdom.

Queen Victoria, said Mr. U, was not the first British monarch to be interested in ginger. It was introduced into England in the fifteenth century and used in the manufacture of gingerbreads in fancy shapes and letters of the alphabet. It was also valued for its medicinal qualities, and Henry VIII is said to have included it in a recipe he sent to the Lord Mayor of London as a remedy against the plague. The Chinese have long valued it in medicine to cure 'indigestion, coughs, giddiness, weakness, headaches, diarrhoea, vomiting, flatulence, and other ailments due to advanced age'!

Ginger, like many of Hong Kong's industries, owes its foundation and prosperity to Chinese enterprise, and in the field of light industries it is Chinese enterprise rather than British that has been supreme. With heavy industry the initiative has come from the British side and a good example is that of the dockyards. This industry also had its origins at Canton before the colony was founded, and the oldest dockyard still preserves the fact in its name—the Hong Kong and Whampoa Dock Company Limited. During the First World War it began to build big vessels, turning out tankers and passenger vessels up to more than 5,000 tons. The great typhoon of 2nd September 1937 brought much salvage work and 44,215 tons of shipping were salvaged and repaired, including one vessel of 18,765 tons. The Second World War saw the company engaged on an extensive programme of 'Empire' class standard cargo vessels (of which three were delivered complete with machinery), minesweepers, tugs, and other Admiralty craft, but this was brought to an end by the fall of Hong Kong. During the Japanese occupation allied bombers made 140 hits on this dockyard.

The scars of war were still evident in April 1950, but even more striking was the tremendous amount that had been done in rehabilitation. The most conspicuous object was the great 100-ton crane which had stood on the Humber until 1930. This, remarkably, was little damaged during the war, though someone wrote to a Hull newspaper that he had seen the crane

shelled and toppling into the harbour! Conspicuous also was an unfinished ship which was being built for the Admiralty when the blow fell. Bombed, broken and rusty, it can now only be broken up. Near by it were two vehicular ferries nearing completion. There was also a rusty red Soviet ship undergoing repairs. The captain carried his Hong Kong dollars about with him and paid for everything in cash!

By the end of the first decade of the present century quite a few important heavy and light industries had been established, called into being largely as ancillaries to Hong Kong's trade. Far distant from all the industrial centres of the world, a modern port had to have dockyards to repair the ships which used it. It was a natural development to build ships and naturally the capacity increased. The first ship built in 1843 was 80 tons. In 1940 ships of up to 10,000 tons could be built. There is the same pattern of development from local requirements to export in the development of the rope industry. The Hong Kong Rope Manufacturing Company started operations in 1884 with a modest capital of \$150,000, which by 1924 became \$2,000,000. Using Manila hemp or 'abaca', it exports the finished rope largely to Singapore, but the stimulus to the establishment of the industry was local—the servicing of ships.

Even the early sugar refineries were a 'refinement' of the entrepôt trade. One of them was the largest under one roof in the world. A place developing as fast as Hong Kong needed great quantities of cement. Much must have been imported before the Green Island Cement Company moved from Macao to Hong Kong in 1899. Since then millions of tons of local cement have probably gone into Hong Kong's docks, fortifications, bridges and buildings. The industry suffered severe damage during the war, but by 1949 was producing 50,000 tons, all used by the local building industry.

There were a number of other important industries already going in the beginning of this century: Jardine Matheson had a cotton-spinning factory with 55,000 spindles. There was a large ice factory and extensive flour-mills. There were also many saw-mills, there were soap-boiling, dyeing, tanning, vermilion-making and tin-smelting works. Other local industries included paper-making, match-making, feather cleaning and packing, cigar-making, glass-blowing, brewing, dairy-farming and

soda-water manufacturing. Most of these still exist and have developed, but the once flourishing sugar refineries and flour-mills have disappeared, though there are a few small concerns left. The Dairy Farm, now one of Hong Kong's more flourishing concerns, was founded by Sir Patrick Manson, the father of tropical medicine, in 1886, with the aim of protecting the milk supply.

'Ordinary water', says a pamphlet produced by a factory dealing with beverages, 'has never satisfied man.' Certainly to judge by the quantities of Coca-Cola and orange squash drunk in Hong Kong it does not satisfy the Chinese. The beverage industry dates from the early days of the Colony, and the old Chinese term for the product 'Ho Laan Shui' (Holland water) indicates that the Dutch were first in the field. Today there are 12 factories and among them are several really large concerns, which include a brewery and three wine industries. The remainder produce soft drinks.

By the time of the war there was no cotton-spinning in Hong Kong. Climatic conditions had not been considered suitable. Jardine's factory had closed and the industry had established itself in Shanghai. Most of the manufacturers there had placed orders for new plant in Britain, America and Japan, and by the time this was ready for delivery conditions in Shanghai had deteriorated, so the orders were delivered to Hong Kong. Now there are 200,000 spindles in operation in the Colony. This of course is a small number compared, say, with Manchester's four-and-a-half million, but the automatic looms of Hong Kong are as well advanced as anywhere in the world, and definitely more advanced than in the United Kingdom.

In 1936 there were only about 450 registered factories. In 1946 there were 978, and in 1949, 1,284, employing 39,563 males and 25,708 females. The reader, wondering what over two million people do in Hong Kong, will probably think that 65,000 odd in industry accounts for very few of them, so that it may be well to pursue this point further.

Actually only factories employing 20 or more hands are registered, and there are an enormous number of under-20 factories in squatter huts, tenements, and anywhere where they can be tucked away under some sort of shelter. And of course, apart from those engaged in fishing, agriculture, and domestic

service, there are large numbers of casual workers such as coal coolies, stevedores, earth carriers, and street hawkers, and the innumerable assistants in every shop. Then again, as many workshops are simply family concerns with no outside labour, and there are small illegal concerns which may exist for some time without being discovered, the figures given are a long way from being complete.

The range of articles manufactured is extraordinarily varied. Rubber shoes, torches, needles, lamps, nails, locks, pots and pans, cotton and art. silk, clothing, umbrellas, leather goods, rattan furniture, camphor wood chests, matches, buttons, plastic goods, toys, rope, paints, canned goods, vacuum flasks, electrical accessories, and fire crackers. On the market stalls in Africa and elsewhere you find such articles as these and they are almost always imported. In Hong Kong you find the same kind of stalls, but time after time we examined them without finding anything of significance which was not made in Hong Kong. Yet *Hong Kong Around and About*, published in 1931, could say that 'the stalls in the little market towns are heaped with foreign clothes, hats, towels, cigarettes, kerosene, gay tin and enamel wares from Birmingham, and cottons from Manchester'.

Hong Kong exports three million pairs of gumboots and rubber shoes a year. In 1948, but for Hong Kong, British children would have gone with wet feet, for United Kingdom manufacturers had to export all their rubber goods, and gumboots were imported from Hong Kong. Metalware factories, of which there are 117, give many thousands employment, often in very overcrowded conditions in tenements, and 39 million torch cases were exported in 1949.

A completely new development is a very modern factory turning out plastic goods, and now the shops and booths are stocked with plastic combs, chopsticks, toothbrushes, toys, etc. About 20 factories make hats, converting ladies' old felt hats imported from America or elsewhere into boys' caps. From another factory 50,000 dozen babies' nappies were exported over a three-month period, enough to supply every baby of nappy age in Britain with ten.

The reaction of British manufacturers to all this, so I was told by the Department of Commerce and Industry, is not favourable, and that of course is to be expected. But it is quite

untrue to say that Hong Kong is marking goods made in Japan as 'made in Hong Kong', or that the labour is slave labour.

Just before we left for Hong Kong there was a scare about cheap shirts exported from Hong Kong to the United Kingdom. I went to the factory from which they came. There are 200 knitting factories in Hong Kong employing 6,277 workers, but most of them are in tenements and only about a dozen in factory-type buildings. This was one of the largest. It was up to date, though perhaps a bit crowded. It turns out locknit underclothes, jerseys and shirts—600 dozen of the latter a day. All of its output goes to the United Kingdom and we saw shirts being labelled for a firm in Bond Street. The manager told me that the factory could not compete with sleeveless, collarless singlets made in England, but could in garments which required collars to be sewn on. In fact no knitted shirts from Japan have come into Hong Kong since trade with that country has been in operation after the war. All Japanese imports are controlled.

In 1948 the Chinese Manufacturers Union of Hong Kong sponsored a great exhibition of Hong Kong products. Opening it, the Governor, Sir Alexander Grantham, said: 'As we all know, Hong Kong lives by its entrepôt trade. It is therefore primarily commercial, but its manufactures are becoming of increasing importance. For instance, at this exhibition there are displayed two of the latest Colony ventures—plastics and cotton yarn. I trust that these and the other products which have previously been exhibited have come to stay. . . . Hong Kong products can only hold their own if they compare favourably in price with products of other countries: therefore it behoves the various industries to make themselves as efficient as possible. The inefficient will go to the wall.'

'One hears from time to time talk of a protective tariff round Hong Kong, or even a quota system. This, of course, would be in conflict with Hong Kong's role as an entrepôt, and would not be in the interest of the Colony as a whole. But even were Government to agree to such a course, which is extremely unlikely, I do not think it would be the answer. The Hong Kong market itself is too small a market. Our industries must export, and protection in the home market is not likely to lower their prices in the export market.'

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Trade

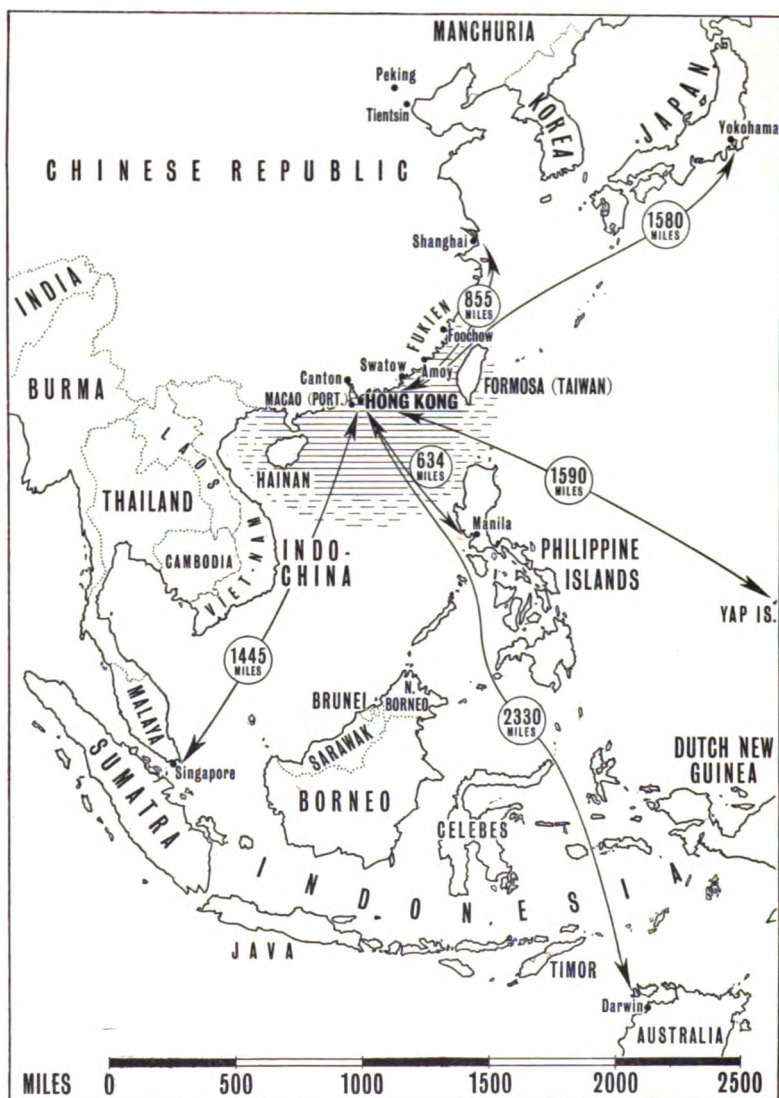
HONG KONG is a city in which most of the streets are streets of shops. The bulk of the trade and commerce on which Hong Kong lives is not seen in the shops, but as the needs of two million people are quite considerable, a large number of shops are necessary. Jostle your way down Des Voeux Road or Queen's Road and your first thought is that you have never seen shops so thickly stocked with goods. It is said that you can buy everything you need in Hong Kong and you can certainly buy a great deal you don't. There are a number of big department stores, some Chinese in pattern, some European. Shopping in them soon teaches you how much more expensive things are than in England, though Chinese friends scoffed at us for not bargaining at all except the English-run department stores.

Even up the steep side-streets, the stalls are thick on the ground and piled high with goods. If there is a space on a wall a woman may have a frame hung there from which she sells rings and other ornaments, or a man displays the torn-off, vividly-coloured covers of paper-backed shockers in his street library. Many small shops are divided and you may find shoes being sold on one side and Chinese medicine on the other. And there are hawkers everywhere.

In the streets near the waterfront are the shops of wholesalers and exporters, which have a more leisured, important air than those of the retailers. The activity there is of a different kind with the goods coming in or going out in bales and packing-cases. A great deal of Hong Kong's enormous trade consists of collecting and bulking goods brought in in small quantities from China and exporting them, and, conversely, of receiving the world's goods, breaking the bulk in Hong Kong and distributing them. On one day our daily paper showed that ships in the harbour were loading for 68 different destinations, from Adelaide to Baltimore, from Liverpool to Honolulu. There are over 600 general importers and exporters, many of whom are Chinese. The Chinese Hongs or business houses have been prominent in the history of Canton, Macao and Hong Kong.

In 1868 some of the Chinese merchants formed themselves into an Association called the Nam Pak Hong, or South North Company. Their object was to trade on a basis of mutual confidence; they do business through agents they never meet and they do not use banks as intermediaries. 'It is all on confidence and trust', said Mr. Tong Ping Tak, the chairman, whose firm has been established in Hong Kong for 90 years. 'The Ancients (the founders of the Association) were always uprighteous and abode by the ethics of Commerce, not only to honour all undertakings, but also to despise riches. Their purpose was to root up abuses and to give rise to benefits.' We met some of the members in their board-room in an atmosphere of blackwood tables and chairs, dominated by a huge portrait of Sun Yat-Sen. The Association calls itself South North because its members trade almost entirely with Southern Asia and North China. Rice is their principal commodity, but, besides many other more ordinary necessities, they handle such nice things as dried apricots, red and black dates, melon seeds, walnuts, mushrooms, bamboo shoots, and red tea. They also deal in strange things: Chinese medicines, clams, hawthorn seeds, black moss, dried cuttle-fish, fungus, dried shrimps, edible seaweed, *bêche-de-mer*, edible bark, awabi, wood fish, dried lily flower, gall nuts, and all the 'tinimies' lumped together in the omnibus heading of 'sea products'. 'Since liberation, this business was becoming very dull', concluded Mr. Tong Ping Tak. 'Dull' seems the last word to apply to the picturesque trade of the Nam Pak Hong merchants.

A visit to the Gold and Silver Exchange was an experience I shall never forget. Their hall is not very large and it has a gallery round it from which we watched the riot below. It is air-conditioned and has 12 large fans, but it was one of the hottest places in which I have been. Down below us was a milling mass of humanity waving bits of paper and yelling themselves hoarse. They were stripped of everything but trousers and singlets and perspiration streamed down them. Round the room there were 400 telephones treble-banked, and they all seemed to be ringing. When I began to take the scene in, I saw that the throng was made up of pushing groups each scrumming round a central figure, the buyer. There are 300 firms who are members of this society and each has three or four clerks here



Capital of an Empire of Trade. Hong Kong's prosperity was founded on trade with China. In recent years the merchant has built up business with Malaya, Indonesia, Thailand, Korea and Japan. Goods come from the United States, Canada and Australia as well as Britain. Trade with Africa, the West Indies and the Middle East has increased.

each day buying and selling gold. Gold is sold in bars of five taels, a tael being 1.33 oz. avoirdupois, and the unit for buying and selling is 10 taels. The closing price on the day previous to our visit in May 1950 was £15 18s. 9d. a tael. The goldsmiths buy their gold here, but much of the business is done by speculators who do not take delivery but try to sell again. They may make several transactions in a day but must settle at 4.30 p.m. when the Exchange closes.

Hong Kong's pre-war prosperity had traditionally rested on its being the clearing-house for goods going to and coming from South China. The war in Europe, and, in 1941, the deviation to Hong Kong of some of the business previously done through other ports on the China coast, brought a great increase in trade. Just before the Japanese struck, Government revenue reached a record level of two million dollars in one week. On Christmas Day 1941 the climax was reached. Hong Kong's great commercial machine came to a stop.

When the Colony was liberated a Department of Supplies, Trade and Industries was set up, and was soon the principal trading organization. It sent missions to all nearby countries to get supplies. Recovery was rapid. During the following year there was a boom in all commodities. The demand was not confined to consumer goods. All commodities, including luxuries, flowed into Hong Kong in an ever-increasing stream: the demand was insatiable. The boom was due to the speedy establishment of law and order, to the fact that the port facilities had not been seriously impaired, and also to the fact that Hong Kong's traditional status as a free port with a minimum of restrictions attracted trade and merchants to the Colony. There always had been close commercial relations between China and the United States, and as the latter country was one of the few in the world which in 1946 had an exportable surplus, it became Hong Kong's biggest customer for her exports, and supplied a larger amount of her imports than any other country.

Owing to the disturbed political conditions in China and all over the Far East, the external pattern of Hong Kong's trade went through considerable modifications. The most disturbing feature was the halving of the trade with China, for on it Hong Kong's real prosperity has always depended. Nevertheless, at

the end of 1949 the trade boom was still continuing, the figures each year far surpassing those of the previous one. Profits, however, became less spectacular.

With the falling off in trade with China the Hong Kong merchant had with his usual enterprise and versatility looked elsewhere. He built up more business with Malaya, Indonesia and Thailand, and a lively trade started with Korea. Trade with Japan advanced, and manufactured goods were in demand from the United States, Canada and Australia. With the free movement in the sterling area, trade with Africa, the West Indies and the Middle East also increased.

This is the way the merchant saw the position in March 1950. Mr. P. S. Cassidy, Chairman of the General Chamber of Commerce, said at the annual meeting:

During the four years since trade was resumed after the reoccupation the economy of Hong Kong has been re-established on what I believe is a firm foundation.

The initiative and efforts not only of our own members but of numerous others outside our organization have yielded handsome returns, much of which has been ploughed back into business. Law and order and a stable currency are the main contributories to our good fortune. . . .

Externally our trade has been subjected to abnormal conditions which have required a good deal of ingenuity to overcome. But the history of the trade of Hong Kong clearly shows that the abnormal is the normal, for the periods when merchandise flowed unimpeded backwards and forwards between this port and the hinterland have been few and far between. The vast potentialities of the China market have been for two hundred years or more the lure of Western traders, a lure which seems to be as remote today as it was when the factories of Canton were set up. I think that most of us here realize that there is little to be gained by taking the long view where trade with China is concerned and that the best course is to seize opportunities as they present themselves. That course has led to the substantial development of our trade with various parts of South East Asia as well as with Japan, Formosa and Korea, so that we are no longer dependent upon the China market for the greater part of our entrepôt trade. And although entrepôt business must always be our main function it is highly desirable to encourage the development of our local industries, for they are likely to play an increasingly important part in our economy.

Hong Kong can never be quite sure of itself. It is at the mercy of forces over which it has no control. The multitude of independent nations in the Far East and western Pacific can take all sorts of action with their overseas trade, which would be

bound to affect Hong Kong, but there is nothing Hong Kong could do to put it right. Hong Kong cannot force trade to come to it. It can only attract. Hence it loathes restrictions of any kind. If they want to make money—and what trader does not?—merchants in Hong Kong must be free traders.

It is an atmosphere which encourages speculation and any rumour may affect the market. While I was in Hong Kong an American aircraft was shot down in the Baltic. Gold and dollars jumped owing to a rumour that the United States was severing diplomatic relations with Russia. A few days later the owner of a big godown business told me that he had no more room because his godowns had been stuffed with paper. Someone else said fantastic prices were being paid for places to store paper. I asked a Chinese merchant why. 'It looks as if there might be war', he said. 'Paper is very cheap now, but if there is a war prices will soar.' The real truth was probably that you can never keep anything quiet in Hong Kong. If one firm buys in a commodity to store against rising prices, others quickly do the same. For over a year stockists of paper had no chance of selling it. Someone in desperation began to off-load his paper at a low price. Others followed and those with a little spare cash were buying it up in case prices should rise.

'It is never safe to prophesy,' I was told, 'but ups and downs are a feature of Hong Kong. We blow with every wind. The new China and its effect on trade may be something different to previous ups and downs. If China accepts Russian doctrine, then we're going to feel the draught.' In fact there are plenty of Communist buying-agents in Hong Kong.

Meantime Hong Kong makes money while it can. Sir Alexander Grantham in a speech to the Legislative Council explained the attitude of Hong Kong in short and succinct sentences:

On the political side we watch with sympathy what is going on in China. We should like to help that great country in her undoubted difficulties, which, I am sure, she will overcome in time, but meanwhile we cannot permit Hong Kong to be the battleground for contending political parties or ideologies. We are just simple traders who want to get on with our daily round and common task. This may not be very noble, but at any rate it does not disturb others. We do not feel that we have a mandate to reform the rest of the world.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Country People and Their Landscape

THE STORY of the cities of Hong Kong is, as we have seen, a recent one. It is written clearly, but, like a palimpsest, on something far older. Of the old story one is far more conscious in the New Territories than on the Island, but the writing is very faded and, it is clear, was never extensive. It is as though the document which the British took up to write their history in this part of the world were a parchment unregarded, imperfect for some reason or another, on which the scribe had done no more than scribble a remark now and then.

Hong Kong itself finds no mention in Chinese histories nor has any ancient monument been found on it. The mainland territories have little more attention in Annals. Although not very far from Canton, the capital of Kwangtung Province of which they immemorially formed part, these areas were very much on the outskirts; they were what we should call 'bush', 'jungle' or 'bedu', in other countries, troublesome places where the inhabitants were bandits or pirates. In those days, governments, whether in Europe or China, found it unprofitable and usually unnecessary to poke their noses into such places.

The part of the South China massif on which the Colony stands so solidly seems to be of a respectable antiquity, considering that it belongs to the Jurassic system, laid down in the Mesozoic age about 150 million years ago. Geologists, however, consider this as anything between youth and middle-age. Ages like this make even Chinese history merely momentary, but the mainland of Hong Kong does in some manner express well an impression of the combination of geological and historical ages. Though they are so old, its hills and valleys have no sense of senility. Firm and rugged though they be, they have yet the air of quite frisky dragons, and while the villages bespeak a civilization so much older than our own it is as gracious and living as that of the Cotswolds.

Somewhere about the time that Edward I was sitting on the throne of England, Kublai Khan and his Mongols were invading China. It was the period of the Sung dynasty, which, if you

THE END OF A DYNASTY

are even mildly fond of things Chinese, you associate with bowls and vases dipped a thick cream, blue as a hedge-sparrow's egg, which has dripped to the base of the vessel and hangs there in a thick rim, looking still wet and recalling in its consistency pre-war cream. It was indeed a polished age in which art and literature flourished. Printing had just been invented when the first Sung Emperor ascended the throne in 950 and books multiplied. But the scholarly Sung were unwarlike and in 1279 the dynasty came to an end in the waters around what is now Hong Kong. The Emperor, no more than a young child, was in flight, driven into these wild lands by the Mongol general. At last he was compelled to take to ship and passed through the narrow Lyemong Pass which separates the Island of Hong Kong from the mainland, and for a short while he stayed on the Kowloon peninsula. Until the Japanese destroyed it during the recent war there was a conspicuous granite boulder on a hill near old Kowloon City incised with the Chinese characters Sung Wong Toi, Platform of the Sung Emperor. Here the imperial court rested during their flight, waiting for news and hoping in vain for help from Canton. When help failed them they took to sampans, but the Mongols hemmed them in and, so it is said, the prime minister, seeing that all was lost, took the boy Emperor on his back and, leaping into the sea, perished with him.

At the time of the tragic end of the Sung dynasty, Kowloon City did not exist and it is said that the area was not much populated until the peaceful time of the Ming dynasty (1368–1628), when many Puntis (Cantonese) settled and founded villages and hamlets. The Tang family, however, were certainly well established in Sung times and so no doubt were other Punti clans. The Tangs in the New Territories are more numerous than the Joneses in Wales and as confusing as those of the latter tribe in the telephone directory. In fact if you had a list of the Tangs they would look rather like names in a directory, for the Chinese always put the surname first.

Behind the walled village of Kam Tin is the family home of the elder, Tang Pak Kau, one of the two J.P.s of the New Territories.* He is a kindly, hospitable man in his sixties with short-cropped white hair and a white moustache. To the charming smiles of all his race he adds the graces of those of old lineage in

* Tang Pak Kau died on 16th July 1950.

any land. The house was built only 60 years ago by his father but it carries the atmosphere of an old-world country house, cool and patioed, with fresh-coloured frescoes and good black-wood furniture. Fifty years ago, he told us, it was common to employ artists from Canton to paint frescoes such as there were here, lively representations of birds amidst trees and country scenes. The house is only one storey high because the villagers would not let his father build higher as they claimed it would spoil the Fung Shui, on which, as we shall see, Chinese planning so much depends.

Amongst Tang Pak Kau's heirlooms, which also included a painting by King Fai Chun of the Sung dynasty, were a collection of ten paintings, drawings of butterflies, birds, a grasshopper, and flowers. The artist had caught all the spirit of a butterfly poised above a flower, or lightly perched on it. These pictures were 800 years old and the colours were as fresh as those of the butterflies we had seen floating on the hillsides near by. They breathed a charm not only of their own but also of the girl who had painted them so long ago.

Fu Cheng was 'a quiet and virtuous girl and had the ability of painting good pictures and writing good compositions'. She was a daughter of Fu Pong, a secretary to the Minister of Sung Ko Chung, the king. She found favour in the king's eyes and he selected her as his second concubine. Of this union was born a daughter on the 12th day of the 12th moon, who was named Tsung Kei. When the child was 10 years old there was an invasion of the kingdom, and she had to flee with the chief concubine and other attendants of the palace to Kom Chau in Kiang Si Province. On the way the young princess was lost.

At that time Tang Yuen Leung of Kam Tin was commander of Kom Chau and leading his soldiers to the rescue of the king. The princess, seeing the Sung flag over his encampment, came to him for protection, but her identity was not disclosed. Having nowhere else to go the princess followed Tang Yuen Leung back to Kam Tin. There she found happiness and security and was like a daughter to him. He, finding that she was a quiet and virtuous girl, married her to his eldest son Tang Tze Ming and they had four sons.

When after some years peace reigned again, the princess, then a widow, sent her eldest son to her nephew, who was now the

king. The king was deeply moved and sent attendants to bring her to the palace and ordered that she be known as Wong Kwu, the Emperor's Aunt. He presented her with the 10 pictures painted by her mother, and all her sons were given high posts in the Government, while she was granted tracts of land and fields for her maintenance.

The Emperor's Aunt was famous for her humility. When she was growing old her grave was chosen for her by a Fung Shui expert. He selected a lion-shaped hill and asked whether she would prefer to be buried on the lion's head, which would mean that her descendants would be great men, or on its tail, which would mean they would be more humble people. 'I do not want my descendants to become great', said the princess. 'They could never be as high as an Emperor's daughter and yet even I was in danger of my life. I wish them to enjoy the red rice and the shiny-scale fish (unhusked rice and herrings—farmers' food). If they have that they should be content.' She died at the age of 87 and was buried on the tail of the lion near Shek Lung. Her four sons received the title of Kwok She, and even today the people of Kam Tin call their fathers 'She' instead of 'Ah Dai', the equivalent of 'Daddy'.

More than eight hundred summers have passed since the gentle Fu Cheng captured the spirit of those birds and butterflies and preserved them on her painting paper. Now my fingers handled them. Eight hundred years is little enough in the history of China, but in the history of my own people the Norman kings were ruling and it falls to none of us to hold pictures of that date in our hands, let alone to feel so close in contact with the artist. These pictures were painted by a princess about the same time that another princess was embroidering the Bayeux tapestry.

The founders of branches of a clan may all be called 'First Ancestor', which tends to be confusing, and the Tangs venerate several First Ancestors, among them Tang Yue born in A.D. 2, their earliest known ancestor, and Tang Hong Fat whom some say was the first Tang to settle in Kam Tin. Tang Pak Kau told us that he can trace his family back for 26 generations from Yuen Leung who befriended the princess. He was one of the 'Five Yuens', five Tang ancestors each with the name of Yuen. The other four left Kam Tin and founded branches of the family elsewhere.

COUNTRY PEOPLE

The people of Kam Tin are all Puntis, or original inhabitants, with one exception, and the Hakkas have not penetrated as they have in other places. The exception is a band of people from two or three villages who had to be moved when the Jubilee Reservoir was built. They were settled at Kam Tin but, we were told, they have never prospered. Indeed, whenever it is now suggested that a village might have to move, as for instance where the new airport is being built, the people of such a village point to the misfortune of the Kam Tin settlers as an example of what happens if people are moved from their homes, for it upsets the Fung Shui.

Kam Tin has also gained notoriety in modern times. When British troops occupied the New Territories in 1899 the villagers, who, it is said, knew nothing about the leasing, were alarmed and shut themselves behind their walls, barring the iron gates. When they refused to open them, the troops attacked and broke into the village and removed the gates, which were given to the Governor, Sir Henry Blake. On his retirement he took them to his home in Ireland and set them up there. Twenty-five years later Tang Pak Kau, on behalf of the village, petitioned Government for their restoration. The Governor, Sir Reginald Stubbs, had some difficulty in tracing them but they were eventually run to earth and brought back from Ireland. On the 26th of May 1925 a ceremony was held at Kam Tin when the gates were returned to their original home.

These iron gates lead into a portico where there is a shrine to the Land God and two red scrolls commemorating the restoration. A lane leads straight from the gateway to the temple at the other end of the village, with rows of houses leading off to right and left. When I saw it the temple had an uncared-for look and a sow was staling in front of the altar. It was sunset and the farmers with their families and animals were returning from the fields, women bearing baskets of greens slung on bamboo poles, girls with pails of water from the well outside the walls, and young children leading great ungainly buffaloes. Outside the gate, on the bridge of earth which now lies across the ancient moat, an ice-cream man was doing a roaring trade with the children.

Some time after the Puntis had occupied the best portion of the peninsula, settlers from the north-east, speaking a different



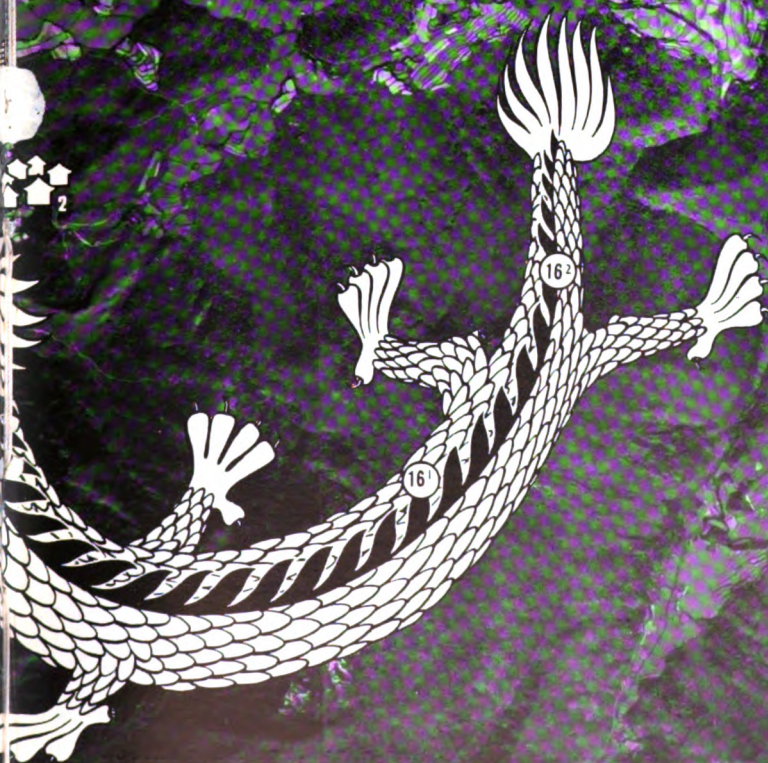
Paul Tsui's home among 'the leaping dragon hills', taken from the grave on the dragon's head (p. 167)

PLATE XXI

The Land of
the Jumping
Dragon:
'Yellow Dragon
Spits Pearl'
(Ch. 18)



- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1 LO WAI | 10 SUN URK TSUEN |
| 2 LO TSUEN | 11 SIU HANG |
| 3 ANCESTRAL TEMPLE | 12 SUNG HIM TONG |
| 4 TUNG KOK WAI | 13 TSUI'S HOUSE |
| 5 MA WAT WAI | 14 THE PEARL |
| 6 MA WAT TSUEN | 15 THE GRAVE (REPRESENTING THE MOUTH OF THE YELLOW DRAGON) |
| 7 WING NING WAI | 16-161 & 162 LUNG SHAN (DRAGON HILL) |
| 8 TAI TENG | 17-171 & 172 THE PHOENIX |
| 9 KUN LUNG WAI | |





Kam Tin, the Village of Ornamental Fields and home of the Tang family (p. 153)



'In the village of Kut Hung . . . is an old-fashioned farm-house shaded by great mango trees' (p. 177)

dialect, started to infiltrate into the Punti settlements. These were Hakkas, strangers, originally natives of Shantung who during the Tsin dynasty, 255-202 B.C., were persecuted and began their wanderings in search of a permanent home. Later on there came another infiltration of men who were originally seafarers, the Hoklos. They were a daring, ferocious people much addicted to smuggling and piracy, and many of them are still boat people. They are a minority in the New Territories, where the pattern of life is largely based on the rivalry of Punti and Hakka. The way it works out provides many an interesting story.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Wind and Water

LONG, LONG AGO and ever so long ago, before London and Hong Kong had Sir Patrick Abercrombie or the Ministry of Town and Country Planning to tell them how to arrange themselves, the Chinese arranged the siting of their homes, their temples and their graves in accordance with the principles of Wind and Water, or Fung Shui. Sir Patrick in his report on town planning in Hong Kong refers to 'Chinese village life in the New Territories with its exquisite examples of humanly developed landscape regulated by the principles of Fung Shui'.

The Book of Burial says the immaterial or spiritual counterpart of the body (if I have got the idea right) when carried by wind will disperse, when bounded by water will stop. The Chinese idea was apparently to prevent this dispersal and the system of achieving this was therefore known as Wind and Water. It seems that, since this is the first mention of Fung Shui, the original system was confined to the siting of graves, but as none of the principal requirements of life can be produced without favourable weather conditions it came to be applied to the siting of temples and houses as well. It is, however, still very important in the case of graves. In *Hong Kong Around and About*, the authors S. H. Peplow and M. Barker say:

In making a grave there is one essential to keep in mind. The spirit must be comfortable. The more beautiful the surroundings and outlook, the better the Fung Shui, and therefore the happier the spirit. The dead, like the living, appreciate warm winds in the winter and cool winds in the summer and so the best site for a grave is facing due south, and if possible near either the sea or other body of water. The grave is made for choice in a small hollow between two hills; the hill on the left as one looks out from the grave, is called the Green Dragon, and that on the right, the White Tiger. The influence from the sun, or Yeung, enters the Green Dragon, passes through the grave to the White Tiger and returns to Yam, the moon influence. As . . . nothing can exist without Yeung and Yam, so the spirit of the departed must be supplied with their influences for its comfort.

Fung Shui is another case in which the West and China reached different conclusions. Just as we developed geomancy so the Chinese developed Fung Shui, and one cannot help hoping that they will always stick to it, for it results in country planning of a far more delightful nature than our own modern system. None the less I like to believe that some Fung Shui instinct has also been at work with us in our pleasure in finding a house with a good view and our dislike of being overlooked, and so on. It is plainly good Fung Shui to site a house facing south so that it is warm in winter and has cooling breezes in summer, and to build on high ground out of the reach of floods and damp. We too see natural features as animals and so on, but unfortunately not nearly so much as the Chinese whose keen imaginations make poetry of any country landscape.

In China a range of hills may take many a shape—a lion, a tiger, a bird, a fish, a snake or a tortoise, but above all a dragon. We all love dragons but I suppose none of us has really and truly seen one. But we would agree with my too matter-of-fact friend Paul Tsui (whom we shall meet later on) that 'it is always taken for granted that the dragon looks something like a snake, but not quite a snake, as it has four legs; nor is it quite like an animal as it is believed to have scales on its snake-like body'.

All the physical features of the countryside are interpreted in terms of the 'Expression of its Dragon'. Never mind if it looks like a tiger, an old man, or a tortoise, it is all referred to as 'Its Dragon expression'.

The general principle accepted in Fung Shui is that every formation has its starting-point, its body, and its end, each of

which forms an entity in itself. Such entities may overlap one another; or one entity may form a part of another greater entity, which has nothing to do with it. For instance, a mountain when looked at from a distance may resemble a huge dragon; on approaching nearer one may spot a peak which, if looked at from a certain angle, is like a standing lion; or a small hillock at one corner of the massive mountain may, to certain individuals, look like a tiger or a tortoise. In selecting your Fung Shui site you can isolate your own lion or tiger or tortoise without taking into consideration the huge dragon which embodies your lion or tiger.

If your need is the tiger, you may ignore the lions or the dragon or the turtle so long as the latter are not in your way. If, for instance, you sit in front of your site which you have decided is a deer, and looking forward from it you observe a hill in the distance that appears to you like a tiger sitting there ready to jump at you, it would be fatal to your fortune to make use of the site you have chosen. A tiger is vulnerable to the attack of a lion, a lion vulnerable to a mouse, a mouse to a cat, a cat to a dog, a dog to a tiger . . . in various cycles of vulnerability. There is no absolute guarantee of perpetual invulnerability and hence, no matter what Fung Shui you have chosen, it does not insure your descendants against harmful influences for ever.

Site selection depends also on many factors. In the case of a dragon, the best site is usually at its head or lips, for thereby you take advantage of the immense majesty of its head. You must not build your grave or house on its eyes, for then you will blind the dragon and it cannot help you. If it is a tiger site, you usually build on one side but at a place slightly behind it, so that you will be in a position to command and control the tiger in your service, as you would do when you hold the leash of your dog. If you build your house immediately in front and beneath a tiger, you will soon become his victim (when he gets hungry). If the site is the site of an old man, you should seek to build your house inside his arms so that you will enjoy not only his protection but also his love, just as if your grandfather might hold you in his arms.

There are other points too, which depend on the time of day you were born. In old Chinese culture a day is divided into

12 periods instead of 24 hours. Each period has its animal. If you belong to the rat group your house or grave should not be built on a site which is fatal to a rat, for example, a cat or a snake: it would be favourable to build on a lion or elephant site.

The selection of a site is in fact a question of an individual's taste or need, but the snags have always been, in China as with us, that what is good for you is death to someone else. You may choose a lion site but it may happen that your lion is looked upon by your neighbours as being the backbone of their dragon. If you build on your lion you may be breaking their dragon's back, hence a dispute or even a fight. Settlement of such a dispute often depends on the ingenious interpretation of a Fung Shui expert called in at the last minute. He may be able to devise a poetic name appropriate to the formation and call it 'A fairy riding the heavenly dragon' as in a certain classical legend. If such a new interpretation is accepted the dispute may be settled by appeasement; otherwise it could easily lead to bloodshed.

Fung Shui experts command large fees—they may charge anything from 30 to 1,000 dollars, according to the wealth of their clients. And, of course, there are a large number of charlatans among them. But taking it all in all, Fung Shui has done much to preserve the balance of man and the rest of nature in China and to make a Chinese landscape the joy it is.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Land of the Jumping Dragon

(i) Yellow Dragon Spits Pearl

NOT FAR from Fan Ling is a fairy-tale country which used to be called the Land of the Dragon's Bones when the Wongs lived there. In the long ago of the Sung dynasty people of the Tang clan came. They were cousins of the Kam Tin Tangs, and in course of time they spread over the eastern half of the New Territories as far as Sha Tau Kok and Tai Po. The Tangs did

not like their dragons dead so they changed the name of the country to the Land of the Jumping Dragon. How the Wongs ever thought the dragon dead one cannot tell, for there the yellow-scaly creature is, its humps all a-quiver and in front of its gaping mouth lies a pearl it has spat forth. If you look at it prosaically enough you can recognize a formation of humpy little hills with a small round hillock in front—Wong Long To Chu the people call them, Yellow Dragon Spits Pearl. Once you practise believing in these dragons it is quite easy to see them. Half an hour a day is more than is necessary.

Amongst the leaping dragon hills a little river twists and turns. They called it the Phoenix, for the phoenix is the dragon's mate. This fairy-tale country you will hardly expect to find on the 1/80:000 map. The War Office does not believe in fairies any longer, though north-east of Fan Ling one village of the dragon's playground, Sun Wai, has slipped in disguised as a camp. In the map it lies in the fork of the river Indus, which the strange English have brought all the way to China with the Ganges to keep it company. Here, oddly enough, the Indus flows between the Cheviots and the Cotswolds and the Ganges between the former and the Mendips. In between is Laffan's Plain, and south of Fan Ling are the South Downs with Snowdon raising its lofty head to 329 metres. Perhaps it is really because homesick soldiers like their own fairy tales. North-west of the river's fork, fairyland is guarded on the map by part of the Cotswolds, Lung Shan or Dragon Hill.

The Tangs built themselves a village, and as they were strangers and only a small number, they built a wall round it. A village with a wall is called Wai and today that first village is known as Lo Wai or Old Walled Village. The village prospered, and as the grandchildren and great-grandchildren multiplied and married and had more grandchildren, there came a time when there was not any more room to build in Lo Wai. So they built another village for the overflow and called it Tung Kok Wai or Walled Village at the Eastern Corner, but as it is built on a point at the end of the slope of a hill people got in the habit of calling it Shan Kok Wai, or Walled Village on the Point of the Hill. All these different names are very confusing until you realize that they are not so much names as descriptions of situations.

Shan Kok Wai was built towards the end of the Sung dynasty, when the princess married Tang Tze Ming. The marriage shed lustre and brought fortune to the whole clan, so they built an ancestral temple near Lo Wai, which is perhaps the largest ancestral temple still existing in the New Territories, and it serves all the eastern Tangs.

Meantime the community continued to increase and three new villages had to be founded. One of these, Kun Lung Wai, is believed to have been built at a much later stage, when the Tang clan was so prosperous that the Emperor himself, the Incarnate Dragon, paid it a visit. To see the Dragon means to have an audience with the Emperor, and Kun Lung Wai means the Walled Village worthy of seeing the Dragon. As that is a very distinguished name it generally manages to get called by it rather than by a description, though it is sometimes known as Sun Wai New Walled Village.

By the time these three new villages had been built Lo Wai had again become too small and another village was built just beyond the ancestral temple. We may suppose that by this time the country was peaceful, or at any rate that the Tangs no longer needed walls to protect them, for it was called Ancestral Temple Unwalled Village, Tzi Tong Tsuen. By this time, too, the first overflow villages of Lo Wai had themselves overflowed into several more villages, except for Shan Kok Wai. No one seems quite to know why, but although it had at first been prosperous its fortunes declined and declined. Most people shake their heads over it and 'expect it was bad Fung Shui'.

(ii) Worship Humility Church

In the 24th year of the reign of the Emperor Kwong Shu, which was 1897, there came to the Land of the Jumping Dragon a Hakka by the name of Kong Tai Kuen. Up to that time none but Tangs had lived there. Kong rented a house and became a tenant-farmer. He recommended two of his relations to come along also, but they stayed only three years and then returned to the Kong ancestral village at Li Long north of the Shum Chun river, while Kong Tai Kuen gave up farming in the Jumping Dragon Land and moved to Fan Ling. This is very

much the pattern of Hakka infiltration into Punti lands. One comes and calls another: if they manage to survive in the face of local prejudice, well and good. If they do not they move and try somewhere else.

Kong had also recommended another Hakka, the Reverend Chan Lok Chun of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, to come along. The Basel Mission had come to Hong Kong in the middle of the nineteenth century and started work in the Swatow district, an attempt which soon failed. Then they tried again at Po Kut north of the Shum Chun river. Anti-foreign sentiment pursued them and they therefore moved to Li Long, where they established a Bible College to train native missionaries. Here they were successful and the mission then opened a new station at Ng Wah up the East River. When these and other stations had been founded a system of parishes was established and in each the mission set up a primary school, founding also a middle school from which candidates as missionaries and teachers could graduate to the Bible College at Li Long.

The Reverend Chan brought his family with him when he came to Jumping Dragon Land in 1897, and, intending to settle down as a farmer, he rented a house in Ancestral Temple Unwalled Village. But in 1898 he decided that his Punti farmhands were too much for him and his neighbours too difficult, so having lost in one year most of his money, he made up his mind to return to mission work and rented his land to kinsmen, Chan Kiu and his father.

In 1900 Chan Kiu moved to a hut which he had built in front of the Pearl-spitting Yellow Dragon. But the Chans were Christians and they did not recognize the dragon Fung Shui, so they called the place Tsung Hom Tong, Pine Trees Terrace Pond. A pond is still there but there do not seem ever to have been any pine trees. Perhaps it was just a recollection of the old family home.

Meanwhile other Christian Hakkas, of the family of Lin, had come to the Land of the Jumping Dragon to farm, and among them was Lin Bun Chung and the Reverend Lin Sin Yuen. These two built a row of eight houses for themselves and the Chans, forming the nucleus of a Hakka village. But it did not all go smoothly. The Tangs never did like the intruding Hakkas,

and one of them said that the houses would interfere with the Fung Shui of the urns in which he kept the bones of his ancestors. The Reverend Lin thereupon petitioned the District Officer (who was later to become well known as Sir Cecil Clementi, a distinguished governor both of Hong Kong and Malaya), and he settled the matter by ordaining that burial sites for the dead could not be allowed to interfere with the building of houses for the living. The Reverend Lin had to pay \$20 for a dragon dance to be performed, but after that everybody appeared to be happy and the Chans and Lins moved in. Thus the village was founded in 1902.

Two of the houses were afterwards sold to the Basel Mission and were used as a chapel for more than 20 years. Perhaps it was at this time that the village got its name of Sung Him Tong, Worship Humble Church or the Village of the Church which Worships Humility. It was not until 1927, by which time the village had grown larger and larger, that a church was built.

Yes, the village grew larger and larger, just as the Tang villages had grown and as all villages do with peace and prosperity. I find it a fascinating story, this tale of how the Chans and the Lins grew up and how other Hakka families came in and more houses were built. There are about 20 houses or terraces in the village now. Many of the newcomers were missionaries who came as pastors and settled on retirement. One of the first was the Reverend Pang Lok Sam. In 1901 he had been sent to the parish of Tai Po and for the next three years he used to come to Humility Worshipping Village once a fortnight to preach. In 1904 a new parish was started there and Pang became its first pastor, holding the office for seven years, after which he retired and built himself a house in the village. He had married the daughter of a Basel Mission convert called Tsui and it was through him that his brother-in-law, Peter Tsui, came. Peter Tsui Yan Sau had been born in the East River district and educated at St. Joseph's College in Hong Kong. He became a Catholic and returned later as a master to his old school, but decided to start a school on his own and founded the Wah Yan College, which he afterwards sold to the Jesuit Fathers.

Today the village of Worship Humility Church consists of a collection of multiple families. There are Tsuis and Lins and Pangs and Chans and Cheungs (Cheung Wo Bun came as a

missionary in 1913) and Tsangs (Tsang Ting Fai came in 1927)—about ten different families not related by blood but with Christianity as the common bond. Herein lies the difference between them and the Punti Tangs, none of whom are Christians.

Not all of the villagers are in the Church or on the land, though there is scarce a family not represented in one or the other. But they could not all live on so restricted an area and many of them have therefore travelled far afield and some have gained distinction. The younger brother of Chan Kiu went off to British Guiana, a son of the Reverend Cheung went to North Borneo and another to Sarawak. The Reverend Lin Sin Yuen had four sons, all distinguished. The eldest, Dr. D. Y. Lin, has been famous all over China and is well known in America. The second, a Yale graduate, is a professor of English; the third is also an American graduate, and the fourth is an agriculturist.

(iii) In Jumping Dragon Land

The first time we came to the village was with Dr. D. Y. Lin himself. He had been born in it and had gone to school there. He then went, with missionary assistance, to St. John's University, Shanghai, and thence with a Boxer indemnity scholarship to Columbia University where he had got a doctor's degree of science. As he told us, his was a poor family but he had travelled widely and made the most of his opportunities. After 10 years lecturing at Peking and Nanking Universities, Dr. Lin became Chief Forestry Officer for all China, and in 1936 was appointed Director of Agriculture and Forestry of the Kwangtung Province. During the war he was technical adviser for the development of the Great North West, and afterwards became head of the China National Relief Rehabilitation Administration for South China, or more briefly C.N.R.R.A., the Chinese equivalent of UNRRA. He was then invited to serve as a technical adviser at UNO and, retiring in 1949, had come home to the village.

He had asked us to lunch in the modern villa in which he was living on the outskirts of Fan Ling, and there we met his wife and children. Very American with his accent, spectacles and

homburg, Dr. Lin talked well and interestingly as we sat in his living-room and nibbled peanuts coated with sugar, cashew nuts and puffed rice. He told us with pride that he was a Hakka and that in their battles with the Cantonese the Hakkas proved the better men. There is still animosity between them. The Cantonese despise the Hakkas as the latter are poorer. They are so poor that in fact they never went in for foot-binding, but they are very hard-working and unless they took to a city life they have never been opium smokers. Another of their attributes which Dr. Lin and other Hakkas emphasized is that they take a bath every day. 'If I came home', said Dr. Lin, 'and told my mother I was too tired to bath she was horrified.'

After lunch we went to the village. Walking down a narrow path we came at length to a bridge: a bridge over the narrow deep bed of the Phoenix river which leads from the noisy whirl of today to the quiet of the village. The bridge is narrow, too narrow for any vehicle but a wheelbarrow or a bicycle, and there is an inscription on a boulder on the further side giving the names of those who subscribed to build it. Down at the bottom of the bed the stream runs sluggishly among all the old pots and pans which villagers in too many places throw into their streams. The narrowness of the bridge had saved the village from the Japanese, and it has saved it too from intimate contact with motor-cars, lorries, and the like.

Dr. Lin was working on a sociological survey of the village and said there were 28 families or 236 souls, 57 men, 83 women and 96 children, owning about 50 acres between them. There is a school with 220 children, most of whom come from other villages near by. There is neither doctor nor nurse in the village, nor indeed in Fan Ling, and the sick must go to Tai Po.

Old Mrs. Lin, his mother, now 86, still lives in the village and, I rather gathered, more or less rules it. He did not take us to see her as she rests in the afternoon, but we went to the happy, humble little church from where we could hear the familiar sounds of Easter hymns. A choir of boys and girls were practising and they sang a hymn for us. Though the tune was one we knew, the words were in Chinese.

Not far from the church was a nice-looking large country house and I asked Dr. Lin to whom it belonged. He said that it was not very old and had been built by a rich man. 'I suppose

THE 'SQUIRE'S HOUSE'

you would call him the squire of the village?' I asked, and he agreed. We little knew then we should be staying in that house, but a few weeks later Paul Tsui, the District Officer of the Southern District of the New Territories and son of Peter Tsui, asked us to spend a week-end there with him.

So we did not feel strange when we came again, this time with Paul, to the little bridge and walked between the paddy-fields and the farm-houses, passing again by the church, and came to the 'squire's house'. There we were greeted by Paul's mother, his sisters Agnes, a teacher at Wah Yan College, and Louisa, and three brothers, Joseph, Matthew and Stephen. Louisa and Matthew are undergraduates at the University—the one reading Chinese literature and the other economics—Stephen is on the staff of John D. Hutchison, and Joseph, the youngest brother, who passed out of the Northcote Training College in 1949, is a P.T. instructor. Another brother, Mark, who is in business as an importer of motor-car parts, we had already met. In the background were numerous nephews and nieces.

Although the house is not much more than 20 years old, it had got that pleasant feeling of a well-worn and lived-in country home. The terraced lawns and flower-beds had the homely look of having been left a few weeks too long without the mower and the hoe. On one side there was a fish-pond. Paul explained as we walked out after tea that his house had good Fung Shui for it faced three plateaux or altars, and is backed by three more; furthermore it faced up-river. If you build a house near a river you must face the water flowing towards you and not look into it downstream or all your prosperity will flow away.

The Fung Shui experts had had plenty to exercise them in this village. The hill immediately behind was in fact the Jumping Dragon's head, and it had a number of graves which had long served the villagers as a subject of argument. You must get good Fung Shui for your ancestors' graves in order to ensure success for the family. Presumably the family who had made the first grave had not had too much success, and this would be attributed to bad siting. The next had tried a different angle, but they cannot have done too well either, and so you see on the hillside the efforts at getting just the right angle. Finally in desperation someone had built a quite enormous tomb in order

to make as sure as possible of including in it the place with just the right Fung Shui. So it should have, for it is built right on the dragon's lips. No doubt in the villagers' estimation the fact that Paul had got on so well, and his family prospered, is due to the good Fung Shui his father got for their home.

As Paul led the way along a path over a hill, he talked in his usual rapid fashion on the history and folk-lore of the countryside in which he had been brought up. Scrambling after him we came to the ancient walls of Lo Wai, the earliest of all the Tang villages in the Jumping Dragon's Playground. The gate was narrow and within the walls the houses had an ancient look, though in tropical climates houses and ruins have not got to be very old before weather and the green shifts in which Nature so quickly clothes them give them that ancient look. In one house Paul pointed out the household gods with the symbols of *Sau*—longevity, *Luk*—prosperity, and *Fuk*—family harmony. Outside another was a small walled garden. 'Probably the home of a scholar', said Paul. 'They liked to have a garden to look upon.'

We sat with the oldest inhabitant, Tang Fung Ting, in a slightly more spacious house which had a sort of conservatory with plants in glazed pots and a vine growing over the roof. There were Nationalist posters on the wall, and scrolls, and coloured photographs of Mr. Tang and his son in Western clothes. The table was covered with a miscellaneous collection: paper flowers in bright china vases, newspapers and books, two silver ornamental cups in glass cases, and a Laughing Buddha. Our host confirmed some of the Tang history we had already heard and claimed that his ancestor was the eldest son of the princess. The house must have seen a good deal of history for it was 200 years old. From listening to his talk we had gained the impression that he had never left Lo Wai, but he had gone to Holland in 1925 and remained there for eight years as clerk to a Seamen's Institute in Rotterdam.

Outside a food hawker was peddling chilli and soy sauce, sweets and biscuits. These villages have no market, but a butcher calls each day, blowing his trumpet to announce his arrival; a fishmonger also comes, as well as other hawkers.

The large ancestral temple built near Lo Wai is today used also as a school. There are three chapels, each filled with tablets. The central chapel contains tablets of the important ancestors,

with on one side the chapel with tablets of those who had subscribed, and on the other those who had earned decorations or titles. Subscribers need not be dead to have their tablets placed there, but instead of saying something like 'Rest in peace' they say 'Long live So-and-so'.

'In these old villages', said Paul, 'the Tang clan is dying out and houses are gradually being sold to Hakkas. Land changes hands many times', he went on. 'It is said that there are 800 owners of the same piece of land in a thousand years.'

It was supper-time when we returned and most of the family had already eaten, but Matthew kept the three of us company, and afterwards we were joined by Louisa and Stephen. Louisa has not had the same chance of learning English as her brothers because most of her schooling had to be done in China, to which her family fled during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. But she is doing her best to catch up as she is anxious to learn, but finds the set books like *Pride and Prejudice* rather dull. Paul's father was 'very strict on religion' and he had seen to it that his children were well educated. 'The status of the family has thus been raised', said Paul, although he still has relatives who are simple farmers. When the Wah Yan College was sold to the Jesuits they agreed that the Tsui boys should get a free education there, and at Wah Yan Paul's catholicism was strengthened. Only his mother of all the family remains faithful to the Basel Mission.

On Sunday morning we visited the original farm-huts built by the Lins. We began at No. 1 and were at once struck by the absence of shrines and the fact that the back part had a door directly opposite the front entrance. This is rare in non-Christian homes where precautions are taken to ward off evil spirits. Fortunately they can only travel straight, so you can thwart them by placing something in their path. The front door faces a wall, and the door to the back part of the house is placed to one side.

Chan Kiu, now 81 and one of the first inhabitants, welcomed us in. His face was brown and lined and he sat telling us more history with his legs tucked up underneath him. He had come at the age of about 30 from Li Long at the time of the Boxer rising in order to work on the Reverend Chan's land, and he had built his present house himself. As we talked the church bell

began its summons to Sunday morning worshippers. We looked at the wall clock, which was an hour slow. 'We don't worry about summer time,' said Chan, 'we work according to the sun.' His daughter came in with her child to prepare for church and began washing the little boy's face. We rose to go and called next at the house which had once been the chapel. It was now the home of the pastor, the Reverend Man Fook San, who had been 46 years with the Basel Mission. He is 71 and his wife, smiling and talkative, had been his faithful companion wherever he had gone; they have moved house continuously. 'A missionary must be prepared to go anywhere', she said.

A few doors along we called in for a moment on Mrs. Cheung, widow of the former pastor. She was ready for church in her dark blue Hakka clothing and a large prayer-book was on the table beside her. Finally we went into the largest of the houses where Mrs. Lin lives. But it is also the home of Mr. Pang, son of the Reverend Pang, and it was his family we met. The Rev. Pang, who was a recognized leading elder and had received the Coronation medal, died only three years ago. His widow lives with her son in this house. We could hear the choir singing in the church, and fearing to delay those who were preparing to attend the service, we left.

They were still singing in Worship Humble Church, and there was not a soul about outside, when we left the village shortly afterwards. There was so much in that village to recall other villages one had lived in or known in other countries. Somehow it was a wrench to pass out again over the little bridge into the outer world. May that little bridge and the dragon and the phoenix still contrive to guard the village, and when I go back may they still be singing in Worship Humble Church.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Farmers and Farming

THE ANNUAL REPORT of the Agricultural Department for the year 1946-7 is signed 'Thomas R. Ryan, Acting Superintendent of Agriculture', a piece of information that does not in itself look particularly exciting. But the document has historic interest because it is the first report of its kind ever published in Hong Kong. How the Colony managed to 'get away' with having no Agricultural Department until after the war I do not know, as it has at least 80 square miles of agricultural land farmed by some of the hardest-working farmers in the world. But the greatest interest in that document is that of the signature. It is unlikely that any other colony can claim that it owes its early management, and indeed a share of the inception, of its Agricultural Department to a Jesuit priest, and yet it was to Dr. C. A. G. Herklots and to Father Ryan that the foundation of the Department is really due.

Father Ryan, a remarkable man to whom Hong Kong owes much more than administrative agricultural pioneering, heads a remarkable team of men whose contribution to the Colony's well-being is most noteworthy. Any colony where agriculturists, chemists, co-operative experts, economists, dramatists, educationists, etc., are in short supply would be well advised to indent for a team of Jesuit priests, specifying only that they should be as well equipped as those in Hong Kong.

The urgency of rehabilitating the farming population after the war made the establishment of an agricultural department a pressing need. It started with its acting Superintendent and four Chinese. The needs of the time forced certain enterprises into existence such as the Wholesale Vegetable Market, now joined to a department dealing with co-operative societies, and the pig-breeding station. In addition there were—and still are—the problems of the distribution of fertilizers, animal foods and seeds, and the maturation and distribution of nightsoil. This last and unsavoury product of the cities is a most valuable fertilizer but there are inherent dangers in its use. The possibility of lessening or neutralizing these is being investigated by Father McCarthy,

another Jesuit priest, who is a chemist. Father McCarthy has a number of unusual achievements to his credit. During the war he was in Macao and managed to keep the electricity plant working on anything but the normal fuels. He also produced ladies' finger-nail varnish, which seemed to me a surprising enterprise for a priest !

The main objects in introducing the wholesale marketing of vegetables were to ensure that any profits went to the producer rather than to the middlemen, and that eventually it would lead to co-operative marketing by the farmers themselves. The organization started in September 1946 and met with strong opposition not only from the middlemen, which was to be expected, but also from the farmers, who did not at first appreciate the benefits it could bring them. Now, however, the majority of the farmers have come to realize the advantages of the scheme. There are two markets, a very large one in Kowloon and a smaller one in Hong Kong, and there are five collecting depots in the New Territories from whence the vegetables are taken to the market by Government transport.

Robert Hart, now in charge of the scheme, showed us round the Kowloon market. I could not help thinking what a satisfaction it must have been to the enthusiasts, Dr. Herklots and others, who in the long months of their internment in Stanley had thought over the problem of the farmer and planned this enterprise for the days to come. Their faith had been justified, and they and Father Ryan are owed much by the farmer even if it is not yet fully appreciated. Though a Government enterprise there was a refreshing absence of that atmosphere which one is too apt to consider inseparable from Government undertakings. It was lively and bright and business-like, and the incredible din which is the inevitable accompaniment of any activity in Hong Kong did nothing to disguise the enthusiasm of those who had to do with it. Hart himself, with American training and business experience in North China behind him, was responsible for a great deal of the liveliness and the advertising ideas, amenities, and so on. He had as his assistant a young man, Clifton Large, as British as might be, but born and brought up and educated in Hong Kong so that he was bilingual in English and Cantonese. And the vision of Father Ryan is still there to help Hart and Large to develop the scheme,

aided by the expert knowledge of another of that band of devoted and highly qualified Jesuits, Father O'Dwyer. I asked him what his position in the organization was—he is there every day—and he told me 'unofficial adviser on co-operatives'. Just to make sure that he is qualified he has been, at Vatican expense, round many other countries of the world to study co-operative methods. Fortunate Hong Kong!

Hart and he yelled information at us.

When we arrived preparations were in hand for the second daily auction. The first is at 6 a.m. and the second at 11 a.m. The Hong Kong housewife likes her vegetables fresh and, as I have said before, markets twice a day. What is sold in the wholesale market at six is in the retail markets in time to be bought for the midday meal, and the 11 a.m. auction supplies the afternoon shoppers.

There are about 7,000 sales daily and a large chart on the wall graphically showed how sales had increased. Much of the early success in increasing production, Hart said, was due to propaganda. One method was to post bills on lorries and at depots with 'Grow more vegetables': pencils were distributed with the same slogan on them; match-box labels bore the same message, and the idea, coupled perhaps with increasing demand, took on remarkably quickly.

Visitors, buyers and sellers, and transport drivers are extremely well provided for. The canteen, with its cheap meals, is clean and well run. There is a well-patronized cinema. Above all the echoing din of shouting coolies, farmers and clerks, loud-speakers play popular music and at intervals announcements in Cantonese and Hakka give information—even the hours at which buses are leaving. There are adult classes, a class for boys, who have been earning a precarious living as 'shoe-shine' boys, to mend and make vegetable baskets, and, when we visited the market, Hart had just opened what he proudly called a crèche. Here, in the corner of a godown, mothers could leave their babies in charge of an amah, and each baby had a 'cot' ingeniously made by stretching a piece of canvas across a basket.

For all this the Government takes 10 per cent from the farmers' sales. The whole concept seemed to me a fine enterprise in civic education. It is true, however, that the farmer out in the fields

does not get quite so much out of it as the man who goes to market. But I expect Mr. Hart will devise something for him as well.

Strangeways, the Director of Agriculture, who came to Hong Kong from the Gold Coast, asked Lee Shiu Ying, one of his Assistant Agricultural Officers, to show us something of what the department was doing. Precisely spoken, neatly turned out, Lee looked 28 but was in fact 38. He was born and educated in Hong Kong. 'I always liked human things,' he told us, 'small things, and things to plant. That's why I studied agriculture.' He worked first on a farm with his father, then for a while he farmed in Indo-China, and later became one of the original members of the Agricultural Department. Asked what was his present position on the staff, he replied with a smile 'Oh, a small potato!'

Small, perhaps, in physique, Lee had the enthusiast's large vision, and was convinced that by demonstration it would be possible to modify the farmers' traditional methods in such a way as to produce better crops. At the Agricultural Station at Sheung Shui, for instance, the Department is trying out the production of three crops of paddy a year instead of two; the aim is to get a variety which will take only ninety days to ripen. Everybody was busy in the paddy-fields ploughing and harrowing with buffaloes or transplanting the young crop from the seed nurseries. In dry areas the time of the work depends on the arrival of the rains. The seedlings are taken up with a long spade, carried in baskets by shoulder-pole and planted with the soil attached, thus taking their fertilizer with them. Three women can plant about a fifth of an acre a day, and Lee said they were better at the job than men, and that they are also better at trampling down the weeds.

Rice is still the most popular crop with the Chinese farmer, for at least you have your own food. Vegetables are profitable but they need a lot more work than paddy and they are liable to price fluctuations. A great many European vegetables have been introduced, but the Chinese still prefer their own kinds and the Department is carrying out experiments with them. It was interesting to see lotus, otherwise water-lilies, being cultivated at Sheung Shui as vegetables. There were six varieties, two red, two white, a pink and a double. In some cases it is the tuber

which is edible, but the seeds of all varieties are eaten. The flowers are also popular: indeed, the growing of flowers in the New Territories for market was sufficiently widespread to be much more marked than the usual growing of flowers in tropical colonies. The aesthetic tastes of the Chinese are far more highly developed than those of the Africans, and in Africa the plainly utilitarian side of gardening is more in evidence.

Among new enterprises started on the appointment of an Animal Husbandry Officer was a poultry farm where various experiments are being tried out. It is most important to ensure tender flesh, and the New Hampshire colour is preferred to Rhode Island red because it is a redder red, and that is the Chinese lucky colour. Black or white hens are not as a rule so popular. Then there are Australorps—Australian Orpingtons—which are good layers, second only to Leghorns for production. A most curious variety we saw were Japanese Silkies. They are white and very fluffy with *blue* flesh and *black* bones. The Chinese like them as they consider they have a tonic value.

Mr. Wright, the Animal Husbandry Officer, showed us a most remarkable hatchery at Yuen Long, similar to one we had already accidentally discovered at the back of a shop in Kowloon. The extraordinary thing about this method of hatching eggs is that no artificial heat is applied. The people who go in for it all come from the same district and it is a hereditary occupation requiring much skill. The first step is to put the eggs out into the sun to warm up, the necessary time of exposure being judged by touching the cheek or eyelid with the eggs. When they are sufficiently warm they are put into containers which hold about 750 eggs and which are prepared in this way: unhusked rice is warmed up over a stove and about 3 lb. of heated rice is placed in a gauze cloth and 90 to 100 eggs in another cloth. Two layers of rice and one of eggs are then placed alternately into cylindrical bamboo baskets lined with Chinese absorbent paper to ensure insulation.

For the first four days the eggs and the rice have to be taken out twice a day, the former to be turned and the latter to be reheated. On the fifth day the eggs are tested for fertility and the bad ones discarded; when they are replaced in the basket only one layer of paddy is now sandwiched between each layer of

eggs. From the fifth to the fourteenth day the paddy is heated and the eggs turned twice a day, but from the fifteenth day, although the eggs still have to be turned, the paddy no longer has to be heated. On the sixteenth day the eggs are transferred from the basket to padded wooden shelves and covered with three or four blankets, the number required being judged by the temperature of the room. Here again it is the experience of the operator and not a thermometer which decides whether the temperature is adequate.

On the nineteenth or twentieth day, depending on the temperature, some or all of the blankets are taken off and thin netting is put over the eggs. About this time the birds begin to appear and you see them half in, half out, wet, bedraggled, and exhausted with their struggle. When they are fully hatched they are put into baskets and left to dry off. Now the hatchery is full of a cheeping chorus of chicks or ducklings and the children of the family are kept busy feeding them.

A hatchery can hold about 10,000 eggs and anything from 60 per cent to 80 per cent hatching of fertile fowl eggs and up to 90 per cent of duck eggs can be expected, though the proprietor in Kowloon said that if the mother duck has been eating small sea-shells all her offspring die within a few days of hatching out. It was obviously a most economical method of incubating eggs in large quantities—but—one could only feel that anybody who had not been almost incubated in the same way themselves would hardly be likely to succeed.

Wright gave a most encouraging account of how the Chinese take to new methods. It seemed much easier to get things across here than it did in Africa. Nearly all the poultry farmers and pig breeders take to inoculation, and the Department has peripatetic inoculators constantly on the go. Most native Chinese pigs look as if they have broken backs as they have a tremendous sag in the middle which leaves their bellies dragging on the ground. Wright is eliminating this by crossing them with Berkshires, and one could see from the increasing numbers of pigs without sway-back, as this peculiar condition is called, that before long all the little piggies of the New Territories will have nice straight backs. This will no doubt be very much more comfortable for the pigs, but a Chinese housewife told me that the new kind were not nearly so good to eat!

FISH-PONDS

Another unusual feature of Chinese farming is the fish-ponds. The fry are bred in ponds in China and brought to Hong Kong in buckets, except for Wu Tan, a variety which is so common that the Chinese say 'Wherever there is water Wu Tan grows'. It is a grey mullet and starts life as a salt-water fish. In one year the owner of one of these ponds, who also owned a soya-bean factory, the residue from which helped to feed his fish, imported as fry 15,000 carp, 8,000 grass carp, 2,000 mud carp, 2,000 black carp, 30,000 grey mullet, 5,000 silver carp, 8,000 big head and 1,000 bream. We asked how the fry are counted. If there are under 10,000 they are counted separately: if more than that a bowlful is counted out and the bowl then used as a measure. The fish are for the most part fed on peanut or bean cake and rice bran, but the diet varies with the variety of fish. The grey mullet, for instance, likes chicken food as it has a crop like a hen. About ten labourers have to be employed on one of these fish-ponds and it is necessary also to have watchers to prevent poaching, but it was said that the owners made about a 50 per cent profit.

When we had seen something of the work of the Agricultural Department, Lee took us to meet some farmers. Hong Kong is, I think, remarkable for the number of enthusiasts, like Lee, who work in its departments. Lee is also something of a philosopher. As we drove along with him he told us of his love of nature, music and literature. He prefers a country to a town life as it is more real. 'Early to bed, early to rise, is the best way of living', he said. 'I am not interested in politics. I love humanity and I love my homeland. There is something in the very smell of it which rouses my sentiment for it. I love my job, but it is no good just taking it as a job; I take it as a means of helping people. Unless you do that you won't get anywhere.'

In the village of Kut Hung, just behind the walls of Kam Tin, there is an old-fashioned farm-house shaded by great mango trees. It is the home of Tang Chong Chee, who is, like all the folk hereabout, a member of the Tang clan. Mr. Tang was away when we called. He often has to go into Yuen Long, the nearby market town, on business, but Mrs. Tang was there to welcome us and also his gentle old mother, who, grown simple in her old age, smiled sweetly and moved from one to another of us, patting our hands or drawing our attention to this and that.

Like all old-fashioned Chinese farm-houses this one was dark and dirty. Mrs. Tang finds it hard to manage with seven young children, of whom only the eldest is at school, climbing all over the place, and with Mr. Tang bringing in the baskets of green tomatoes and pig food which surrounded us. The house was full of furniture, including two large double beds with extremely dirty mosquito nets, and baskets of paddy seed, farm equipment and the like lurked in every corner, while utensils with food left in them were higgledy-piggledy all over the place. The only tidy and well-kept part of the house was the kitchen with its neat piles of brushwood and straw used for fuel. Eleven people were living in the house, while next door slept the four farm labourers for whom Mrs. Tang has to provide food.

She is the first to get up in the morning. Six o'clock finds her lighting the fire and then she prepares food and washes and dresses the children. By this time Mr. Tang and his labourers are out in the fields, and about nine o'clock she sends them their morning bowl of rice. There will be another meal in the afternoon and a third after work is finished in the evening.

Mr. Tang is a mixed farmer and paddy is his principal crop, but the main part the rice plays in the economy of this family is to feed them and the labourers. From the other produce of the farm Tang provides for his family's needs and for the money he may put by. The house was lit by electricity (the China Light and Power Company on the whole serves the New Territories very well) and it costs the family about 10 dollars a month. Apart from groceries (the inevitable tea but no sugar) and meat, the farm provides them with all their food, but there is clothing and schooling to be thought of as well as luxuries, though the family has little time for such things as the cinema in Yuen Long. After the paddy crop is finished Tang grows tomatoes, and they are bought mainly by exporters at the wholesale vegetable market in Kowloon and shipped to Malaya. He likes the marketing scheme, Mrs. Tang told us, as it has eliminated the middlemen and he gets more money, but he does not like accompanying his produce to market because he feels sick in a lorry!

Tang also grows sweet potatoes, mainly as food for their four pigs. One had just had a litter, but we could not see it as Mrs. Tang explained apologetically that foreign eyes were bad for

THE PIG OFFERING

baby pigs. Then there are five draught buffaloes all bred on the farm. Their stable is next to the house and another job for Mrs. Tang is to cook their congee or rice porridge. The Tangs and their labourers all have a hard day's work and, as Mrs. Tang said, it is not always that they can go to bed early. At the moment it was all right because there was plenty of water, but in a dry season the men have to stay up late to see that the paddy-fields are properly irrigated. At night they lock up everything but there are also village guards to protect them against marauders, human and animal: last year there were foxes and wild dogs after the pigs.

As we talked a neighbour came in and handed to Mrs. Tang a piece of pork on a string.

'The butcher?' I asked.

'No,' she replied; 'it's Mr. Tang's share of the ancestral offering.'

There is a common fund for ancestor worship, which comes from a communal piece of land that is never divided for inheritance. The sale of the rice from this land buys the pig offering, amongst other things, for the visits to the ancestral graves. After the offering the pig is divided and each male member of the clan gets a share. Each year the clan chooses a member to administer the fund.

As we left the house the four labourers came in for their afternoon meal and were each given a bowl of rice with some sort of sauce on it. Old granny took my hand. She wanted a little present and got it. The sun shone down among the mango trees, making shade patterns on the hard ground.

The gentle afternoon light. Tired men with a hard day behind them but the finest night's sleep ahead. Was it all very different after all? I think not. It seemed to me very much like a Shropshire farm hidden in a quiet valley in the Welsh border country. One night as I was crossing on the Kowloon ferry, my companion, a nice-looking, dimple-cheeked young man who is the foreign editor of Hong Kong's Communist newspaper and knows England, asked me if I were a northerner or a southerner (Chinese are either northerners or southerners).

'Neither,' I said; 'I was born and brought up in the Midlands in a county called Shropshire. Have you been there?'

'No,' he said, 'but I know of it. So you are a Shropshire Lad. I took A. E. Housman for my thesis at the University.' We

quoted *The Shropshire Lad* at each other as we crossed Hong Kong's harbour in the moonlight.

'You know, he was very Chinese in his thought, A. E. Housman', he said.

Or are the Chinese very Salopian? There were plenty of Shropshire Lads near Kam Tin that afternoon, for the K.S.L.I. camp was quite close at hand. But I expect they felt a long way from Ludlow and Clee.

'Leave your home behind you,
Your friends by field and town;
Oh, town and field will mind you
Till Ludlow Tower is down.'

Not far from Ping Shan police station a narrow, winding track leads to some scattered modern farmers' houses. Here you will find Kam Lung farm, or the Farm of the Golden Dragon, and the home of the Chan family. Father Chan is a one-eyed, round-faced, middle-aged little man, and he was wearing a grey-blue blouse and trousers. He greeted us with a kind, smiling face. Mother Chan, with a serene, lined face and a gentle smile, busily carried pails of food to the chickens. The family stood around at varying distances, dependent on their ages and sense of shyness, while Father Chan introduced them.

First came Chan Kam Ho, Beautiful Peach, his firstborn, now a girl of 22 with the healthy colour and strong limbs which are a mark of the outdoor farmer's daughter all over the world. Next was Chan Kwa Low, the Stream of the Country, a boy of 20 with the long, narrow face of his mother. He was home for the week-end, being a boarder at a school in Kowloon. Then came Chan Kwa Kwan, Equality of the Country, a replica of Father Chan and a nice sturdy child of 12 or 13. Chan Lai Yung, Beautiful Face, the middle daughter, resembled her older sister. She wore a Chinese dress and had bare brown legs. Chan Lai Ming, Beautiful Brightness, the third girl, was rather shy and stood away off near the doorway, her short hair tousled and uncombed. Last was Chan Kwa Ping, Prosperity of the Country, so called because he was born the year the Japanese were defeated. He still clung to his mother's skirt. All the younger ones go to the Government School on the other side of the main road.



‘The happy, humble little church of Sung Him Tong, the Church which Worships Humility’ (p. 164)



The gates of Kam Tin, once taken to Ireland and restored in 1925 (p. 156)



A cotton mill. 'The automatic looms of Hong Kong are as well advanced as anywhere in the world' (p. 143)



A Kowloon rubber factory. 'In 1948, but for Hong Kong, British children would have gone with wet feet' (p. 144)



‘If there is a space on a wall a man displays the covers of shockers
in his street library’ (p. 146)

PLATE XXVII



Hakka children from Tung Chung village. The Hakkas came originally from Shantung

PLATE XXVIII

Nearly twenty years ago Father Chan had come with his wife and Kam Ho and Kwa Low from the San Wai district of Kwangtung. He had a capital of £44 and he built himself a matshed hut. He was very proud of that matshed beginning and treasures a photograph of the hut. He was fond of chickens and someone advised him to try White Leghorns. He wrote to an address in Oregon and from there had bought his first few pedigree birds. He showed me the pedigrees and the bills. To me, used to African and Arabian farmers, this careful preservation of records was new, and indeed the whole thorough, painstaking approach to farming contended greatly with the happy-go-lucky ways of farmers in other tropical colonies.

Little by little Father Chan's stock had grown. He reinforced them with further pedigree White Leghorns from California. He got to know them and their ways and gradually he was able to build up his farm and his stock. Bit by bit he had bought land from his neighbours. He launched out into vegetable growing and his produce is sold at the Government wholesale market. All this he told us in the high-ceilinged central room of the modern house he had built eighteen months before. In the next room he had incubators of his own design, six of them each taking 400 eggs. The war, of course, had set him back a lot. At the end of it he had only four hens as there was no food for them. Today he sells about a thousand birds a month, getting 5s. for a young chicken and 1s. 5d. for an egg for hatching. People come from all around to buy his birds and he said that 90 per cent of the farms with White Leghorns had originally bought their stock from him. He imports his chicken food, which includes oyster shells and dried fish, from China.

As we left the Chan home, passing between the pens in which chickens were pecking busily, I said to Father Chan how impressed I had been by his story. I was wishing I could see farms like this all over Africa and I asked him how he accounted for his success.

'You see,' he said with a smile, 'I know them and how they feel and what they want. They know that I know. I am a friend of chickens.'

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Boat People—(i) Sin Lo the Sailor

AMONGST THE boat people one is seeing the story of a people which has grown old on the waters. As long as the Chinese have dwelt in Southern China, or at any rate as long as they have put to sea in ships, there has been a community of water-dwellers. It was much smaller than it is at present, for water-dwellers no less than land-dwellers need peace and security to expand. But cities afloat leave no ancient monuments, nor do their citizens leave footprints, tracks and roads for us to find traces of their bygone stories. As the surface of the waters is today, so it was in the beginning.

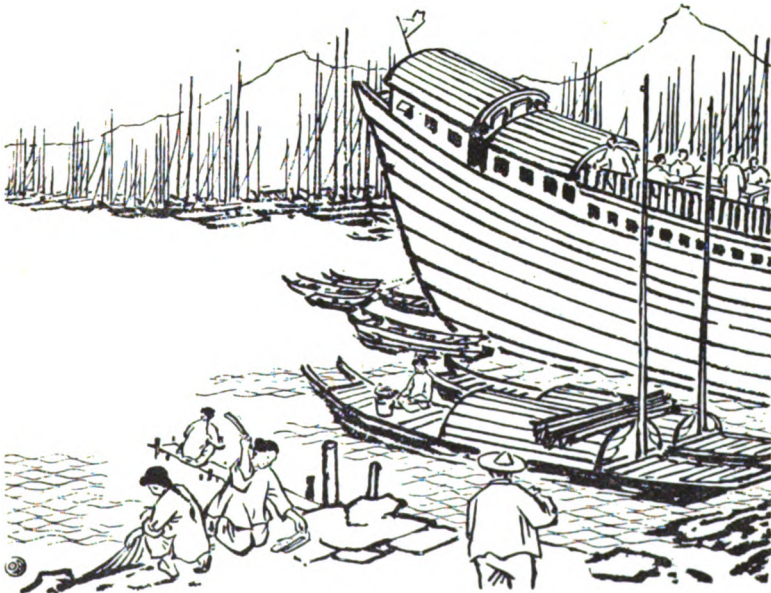
Though their lives are instinct with history and tradition, the boat people are modern-minded and of all the dwellers in Hong Kong they must surely be the happiest. They have no housing problems, they have all the fresh air they want, it is easy for them to be clean, and no one gets fresher fish cheaper than they do. The land-dweller may not envy them typhoons and other perils of the deep, but these they take as the ordinary hazards of their calling.

It is officially estimated that there are 114,400 people living afloat on the craft licensed at Hong Kong, though the popular guess is round about 200,000. Forests of masts, thicker than chimneys in the Black Country, mark such junk cities as Aberdeen, Stanley, Cheung Chau Island, Tai Po, Sai Kung or Tsun Wan. Tai O on Lan Tau Island, where the Chinese frontier curiously comes to the water's edge, is like some far-eastern Venice. Here many of the families of boat people live in shacks on wooden piles, and ferry-boats take you down the long canals which are its streets.

Coming down the hill into Aberdeen it is easy to appreciate why it has sheltered sea-going craft from ancient days, for it is well protected by this hill from easterly gales, an essential consideration in Hong Kong, and for that matter it is well protected on all sides. The numerous gullies running down to the sea promised a fresh water supply, and on the hillsides the vegetables which the sea-folk need no less than the rest of us can

be cultivated. Nature has well provided the sea-going people of Hong Kong with harbours of this kind, and settlements have grown up at the water's edge to supply them and to subsist on services to them.

Dozens of young women in blue pyjama coats and black trousers grab you as you approach the waterfront. The only thing to do is to advance firmly to the nearest sampan and tread determinedly on it, hoping that it belongs to the prettiest of your abductors. Our captors, who were cousins, proved to be not so young and rather plain. But their sampan was painted as gay a blue as the others and they had comfortable wicker settees for us to sit on. All these sampans are worked by women, who are themselves of the boat people, and who often belong to a junk family. They sleep in their ferry-boat sampans or in a 'house sampan' which is home as well as being a fishing boat. Our ferry-women with serious faces and quiet voices pushed out on to the calm waters of the harbour making for the Yue Lee Tai (Peaceful Fish Profit) floating restaurant.



'Forests of masts mark the junk cities'

THE BOAT PEOPLE

There are about six of these floating restaurants. They have three decks: down below are the family cabins, then a main covered-in deck, and on top, covered with gay awnings, a restaurant floor. They are especially picturesque at night, lit with strip lighting. Unfortunately in these regulation-bound days the Health Authorities look rather sideways at their fresh water supply, and the fire brigade regard their kitchens with some misgivings. I cannot help hoping they will be able to weather these difficulties: it is worth taking some risks to preserve their attraction.

Mounting to the upper deck we were greeted by the owner, seated at one of the round tables, and given tea. Sin Lo, I thought, was an impressive man, confident and sure in his movements with an air of a competent seaman with whom you would willingly go to sea. His alert eyes looked at you from a brown and sunburnt face. But I doubt if he was an easy man. I expect his 'brass' weighed heavily with him in more senses than one. He was short and stocky, probably about 52.

Sin Lo really was a sailor, much more so than our more familiar friend Sinbad, who, after all, was merely a merchant trying his luck and lot on his many voyages. As we sat drinking glass after glass of sugarless, milkless China tea, Sin Lo told us his life story. He talked to the point and used his hands freely to emphasize his words, but he was not garrulous.

Four generations of his forebears he knows were fishermen, and probably the Sin family has always lived on the water. His grandfather owned one junk, his father had two. He and his six brothers now own five fresh-fish trawlers, two large and three small, a motorized salt- and fresh-fish carrier, the marine restaurant on which we were sitting, and a fish buying and selling shop. This last was an enterprising move, for fish buying and selling was traditionally a shore business, and until recently the *la'ans* or combines of fish dealers had a stranglehold on the fishermen. They bought their catches, advanced them money, and sold the fish in the markets. Sin Lo was trying to break away from this.

Of all his ventures, the shore trading in fish is the most profitable, but the fish catching, transporting, salting, buying and selling, and the restaurant, are all closely tied up together. Sin Lo has shown vision and enterprise in getting all the strings into

his own hands, and it works because he and his brothers co-operate and each looks after one or other part of the business, of which Sin Lo is no doubt the brains. He is now a capitalist and lends money to the fisher-folk.

His two small sons were about us as we talked, likely-looking boys. I asked Sin Lo if he was going to make them work their way up as he had done. He smiled at this. 'They are going to school on shore and when they grow up they will be fish merchants and junk owners.'

I should imagine that it is much the same with the sea-folk as with the landmen. There is a cycle of prosperity which is not a peculiarity of Chinese, as we have it ourselves, and I have seen it in a marked degree among Arabs, but it is a great feature of China. Time and again you meet with a story of a peasant who has worked hard and been thrifty. He has bought more land and with the aid of his sons has worked it successfully. The sons brought up in that tradition have also worked hard and added to the family fortunes, but the family, now being well-to-do, have let the children grow up in play rather than work, and the fortunes of the third and fourth generations (if the fortunes last so long) are more often than not dissipated.

Sin Lo said that most of the boat people come from Pun Yue or Nan Hoi districts and all of these are Cantonese. Some of the fisher-folk are Hoklo, but though there are few of them they sail and row the fastest boats. They are generally found in the eastern New Territories. Hakka boats are largely used for ferry work in the eastern waters. The Cantonese fisher-folk, called Tanka, form the great majority of the boat people. 'But', added Sin Lo, 'they have no country. Their boats are their homes and their native lands.'

The junks are all built in Hong Kong and 90 per cent of the owners borrow money from fish merchants to buy them. They do not pay interest but sell their catches to the merchant at a low price. This is in the pattern of money-lending all over the East and the actual rates of usury are enormous. Fisher people are rarely out of debt.

There are a lot of employed men as well as families on the junks, paid and engaged in diverse ways. Those who bait hooks get 12s. 6d. plus food and a commission on the sale. Commission is 80 cents on \$100 for those who pull in the fish (the hardest

job), 50 cents for lowering and 40 cents for baiting. A man is engaged or dismissed on the 24th day of the last month of the year. If an owner wishes to engage a particular man, he must advance him £18 to £30 on his commission. The engagement is for a year, but a man so engaged can leave the job on the 5th day of the 5th moon, *i.e.* after about four months, but if he does so he must refund the unearned balance of his advance. It is very rare for a man having had an advance to abscond.

The junk owner has his whole family living aboard, and when the families of his employees also work for him, they too may live aboard. Their children take their first uncertain steps among the ropes and tackle, they grow up helping to do this or that small job, and they handle the ship almost by instinct as soon as they are tall and strong enough. They are married at sea and the marriage feast always takes place on a special wedding junk, one of which is to be found in every junk harbour.

The fish-carrying junks which ply between the fishing junks and the shore take out goods and even medicines to the fishing grounds. The large junks stay at sea for a long time and these fish carriers, generally now motorized, bring their catches ashore daily. 'Fishermen', said Sin Lo, 'are becoming wiser and wiser. Today there are only two junks here fitted with engines. Tomorrow there will be hundreds of them. You see, they make more money. The turnover for a motor-going junk is £30,000 a year. A sailing junk only gets £6,000.'

It was already dark when Sin Lo had finished explaining the methods of fishing to us, and we set off in our sampan to visit some of his fleet with him. We first boarded one of his small fishing junks. I was surprised at its cleanliness. Dhows I had known well and travelled in for many years in East African and Arabian waters; they are not remarkable for their cleanliness, but this, and other junks I saw, I found spotless. Even the decks of the living quarters were beautifully polished, but cabin space seemed even more limited than the cubicles and bedspaces of the tenement dwellers. Between the crew's cabin, amidships, and the galley aft, which with the hatch open allowed the cook to stand upright, was the master's cabin. On one side was a compartment not more than 4 to 4½ feet high and some 6 feet square in which he and his family slept on mats; on the other a space

of about the same size with two rows of shelves where clothes were stored.

The master was a good-looking young man of about 30 with a gentle, patient-faced wife of about the same age, and they had six children. As we talked she caressed her baby daughter Chin Kiu, her long, narrow face lighting up with a kindly smile. The mother herself had been born and lived her life on a boat. She looked after the wants of the men aboard, cooking, washing and mending for them.

They had brought in two to three piculs of fish and some lobsters that day and were getting ready to sail again. 'There's wind outside,' said the master, looking seaward; 'we're in for a rough night. There's no sleep for us when the wind is strong.'

I had a puff at his pipe, a thick length of bamboo about 2½ feet long with water at one end. There is a small tube about half-way up in which you put a pinch of tobacco, lighting it with a joss-stick. One good suck causes the tobacco to shoot back and you are left with a chestful of smoke. If you want another puff the performance has to be repeated.

Every junk carries a small sampan and has a wind-sock blowing from the after-mast. Sin Lo's junk had no flag, though he said he flies some sort of flag on feast days. Owing to the ever-present threat of piracy, junks are allowed to carry arms according to their size, and this one was allowed two rifles, one a Lee-Enfield and the other a Mauser.

'We have only used them in practice so far', said the master. Sin Lo told us this junk had cost £1,250 to build and another £300 to equip.

Embarking once again in our sampan, we were poled to Sin Lo's Diesel-engined fish carrier. In this he carries ice and salt. It puts out to sea daily to fetch the fish from the deep sea-going junks, bringing it to his store-junks and godowns. The fish are then taken by lorry to market and housewives buy them next morning. As we talked a woolly chow puppy, called Wu Li or Black Tongue, charged about between our legs. Every junk has its dog and also a cat for rat-catching.

Our last call was to the office junk and store junk, both moored to the wharf and with a narrow plank connecting them. A clerk sat in the office-cabin on one junk, and on the other the

hatches were filled with fish in salt and fresh fish in ice. All the fish must be sold through the Government marketing scheme except 'fish with no blood', which may be sold on the free market. This includes lobsters, prawns, cuttle-fish and shellfish generally. Water was laid on to these two junks and they had electric light. This led to the story of how they got it. It was all due to Sin Kei, the third of the Sin brothers.

On the 7th day of the 7th moon (August) in 1941 he was ashore, for there was a typhoon. At that time the harbour was mined and in the storm a mine broke loose and drifted close to the pier. Sin Kei saw it and, in spite of the wind and rough sea, he threw off his clothes, leaped into the water and pushed the mine clear of the shore. Onlookers had meanwhile called for help and the Navy sent men who dismantled the mine. Sin Kei was given a medal and £3 3s. for his bravery, but more than that, the Navy asked the electricity company to supply the brothers' vessels with light as a special privilege.

(ii) At Shau Ki Wan

Chinese hands are never idle. The thought came to me again as we looked down from the jetty steps at Shau Ki Wan on the girls in the ferry sampans, each embroidering with coloured silks or doing other needlework. But the girls have a sixth sense for a passenger in the offing and we were quickly annexed by a blue-coated damsel with a long, neatly-plaited pigtail: this indicated she was not yet married.

Although it is now in so many ways urbanized, Shau Ki Wan still keeps much of the air of a small fishing village. It gives me the feeling of arriving at a pleasant out-of-the-world place, a little fishing port nestling, like so many in other countries, at the foot of sheltering hills. Fisher-folk and sailors are generally God-fearing people and it is not they who make seaports the places of iniquity they often are. In the little fishing ports religion seems to flourish. I liked the atmosphere of the old temple to Tien How at Shau Ki Wan. There the goddess sits enshrined with Kwan Yin (Koon Yam) on her right hand, and Kwan Tai on her left. Two guards stand on either side of the aisle. They are barefooted because they have to walk in the

water to protect the sea goddess. There was goodness about this temple and in the spirit of those who crept humbly into it.

In the streets and shops of Shau Ki Wan all that a sailor needs can be bought. Lines and hooks are much in evidence and there was a man hammering hooks by the roadside. Another was making a basket trap and women were making fishing-lines. It has its own shipyards where I saw a junk and a sampan being built of timber from the Pearl River.

We were skilfully poled to the large motor-junk of Lai Kwong Chan. Here again I was vastly attracted by the cleanliness and good order, and would have given a good deal to have been able to accept the invitation to go on a cruise, but I could not spare a week for this. Behind a curtain in the main cabin was a wireless set, and the galley with its bright brass pots was as spotless as the cabins.

The junk cost £2,500 to £3,000 to build eight years ago and Lai Kwong Chan borrowed money to get the engine. The engineer sleeps beside his engines below deck, and on the other side of the engine-room was the 'chapel', a cupboard with a door enclosing a beautifully-kept altar and shrine. In front of a number of variously shaped and sized images in bright colours were two rows of five red cups and five white cups for their tea offerings. An offering of fruit lay on a dish. Paper dresses and a small flag brought from a temple hung on the walls.

There were 19 people living on Lai's junk and at first the smaller members of his family kept out of our way, but after we settled down to talk on the gunwale the family gathered round us, and two or three little boys edged near, only to run away with giggles and shrieks when I tried to catch them. The women were all neatly dressed, but the neatest of all was Lai's first wife. His concubine or second wife was younger. Lai has five sons in the Middle School at Wanchai who live with relatives. The youngest, Lai Tong, with his hair falling over his eyes, was playing round us. His daughter, Lai Man Chan, a girl of 15 with her hair in a long thick plait, sat on a wicker chair eating melon seeds, a habit which all classes of Chinese share with the inhabitants of Arab harems. She was playing with the grandson, Lai Hung Kwai, an imp whose roving habits were checked by a harness and a rope which anchored him to her chair. The child's mother, a pretty girl, sat listening to us.

The two wives, the daughter, and the daughter-in-law do all the domestic chores and also help to make fishing-lines. Sometimes they assist with the fishing, but keeping the ship clean takes a lot of time. Soon the children will join the rest of the family at school, and even now there were plans for consulting the fortune-teller as to a favourable time for them to begin.

As we talked men were cutting and pounding up a curious red and yellow root vegetable, which looked rather like a swede but was almost as tough as wood. This is boiled and used for tanning nets, which has to be done every six months. The nets are also treated with whites of eggs to keep them strong. That is why you find in every fishing village salted yolks of eggs drying or on sale in markets. When I first saw them I thought they were crystalized apricots, but though they taste very differently they are not at all bad.

Conversation was interrupted by a burst of crackers and the sound of music. There was a fisherman's wedding in progress on a nearby junk, and a decorated junk crowded with men and women in bright blue clothes passed by. It bore presents to the bride. This led to a conversation on how marriages were arranged among the fisher people, and Lai's daughter-in-law sat close by suppressing giggles quietly as he told of how he had arranged her marriage. A friend who knew he was looking for a wife for his son had suggested this girl, and Lai had made inquiries as to whether she was of respectable family, if she herself had a good character and if she worked hard. These things he learned from friends and relatives. As it all sounded satisfactory he went to have a look at the girl, and his wife did the same. They thought she was worthy to come into the family, and, as her parents were willing, they consulted a fortune-teller to find an auspicious day to introduce her to their son.

A bride is brought to her new home by boat and wears red clothes with a red veil over her face. First she must worship at the altar and then at the ancestral tablets. After that she must salute her new parents and offer them tea, which is carried behind her. She brings with her only her own jewellery (and the women of her new family check that up very closely), her clothing and blankets.

Lai told us that a wedding at sea costs from £62 to £620, and his son's had cost £125 to £185, which was the usual amount.

When it comes to taking a second wife, Lai said, a man chooses his own, though sometimes if they are alive his parents forbid it. The first wife is not always told in case it means an upset, but of course if they have got to live together she has got to know. Trouble, Lai admitted, sometimes took place, particularly over the children. But his two seemed amiable enough to each other. You can keep them reasonably happy if you treat them both alike. His two wives had an equal display of gold ornaments and even gold buttons, and both wore jade bangles. Jade is lucky and, like sailors of all nations, Chinese sailors are very superstitious. We asked Lai about superstitions and these are the ones he remembered:

Fishing may not be good if a child is born on board, so boat-women almost always go ashore to have their babies, either at the house of a friend or, nowadays, at a maternity home.

If anything is broken at the time a junk is about to sail it is better to delay departure for a day or two. If there is an accident after Chinese New Year, such as a collision between junks when putting out to sea, or, he said, a search by the police, that will bring bad luck for the whole year. On the other hand, if the first voyage after the New Year goes well, that is a good omen for the rest of the year.

He also told us that if chopsticks are dropped someone must quickly say a lucky word, but that is a land superstition also.

We talked about pirates. Lai was allowed three rifles for protection against them. He chose the better part of valour when he saw them: 'If they chase me, I try to avoid them'. They are often to be met with near the China coast and at present he gives China ports a wide berth. The bad spots are Kwong Hoi, Yeung Kong, and Ling Ting Island.

Two or three years ago pirates overtook him and tried to come alongside. They usually fire first to draw return fire and find out the strength of their quarry. If they think themselves stronger they will try to board. Lai said that today they were well equipped and even had tommy-guns. Many had arms captured from the Japanese or sold by deserters. The Chinese Customs try to fight them, but the pirates are often better armed. Only about 20 per cent of the fishermen live in Chinese ports, the rest in Hong Kong.

I asked him why, and got the answer I wanted:

'Because there is peace and no pirates.'

'Do you think of yourself as a native of Hong Kong?' I asked him. 'Do you feel you are a British subject with a share in Hong Kong?'

'No,' said Lai, 'I don't. For one thing, my ancestors' tombs are in Macao and my father was born there, though I was born in Hong Kong. Besides, what difference would it make if I were British? Although I am Chinese I am well protected and I make my living here. I am a business man and only interested in my business. I do my best to catch fish and I bring it to Hong Kong to feed the people.'

'That's all very well', I argued. 'You admit all the benefits you receive from living in Hong Kong, but don't you feel at all that you should help to protect Hong Kong and preserve the benefits which all enjoy? Shouldn't you feel that as a citizen of Hong Kong you should at least do something for the common good? In our country the people who are interested in business also work for the common good.'

'The people who in Hong Kong also work for the good of the people are well educated', said Lai. 'Even if we wanted to do something we are not educated. If you want to develop public spirit among fishermen you must give them more schools and teach them the idea of public spirit.'

I was struck that Lai had thought that the lack of public spirit in Hong Kong (indeed it is a marked characteristic of Chinese) could be remedied by giving education in it.

Lai had none of the forcefulness of character of Sin Lo at Aberdeen, but he was essentially a 'decent chap'. He had an open face and was modest and unassuming in his manner. At first he owned one boat only. Then he bought a boat for his brothers, and now, he said, he must buy one for his sons. He said that if he were in funds he lent money to others or invested in shops belonging to friends. Before we left I asked him what were his ambitions in life.

'I want to get more money,' he replied, 'and then hand over my business to my sons. I shall be happy if my sons and daughters can each have a boat. Then I would like to retire and live on land.'

Life on the purse-seining sampans is an even more constricted affair than life on a junk. Purse-seining needs two sampans,

each costing £435, and the people obviously have less money than junk owners. It is like the difference between the farmer with many acres and the cottager with a small-holding. These sampans are 24 feet in length and 10 in breadth, with a rounded and fairly broad hull. There are hundreds of them in the scattered bays of Hong Kong.

Lai Ng belonged to the same clan as Lai Kwong Chan, but although it was less easy for him to make dollars he was in no way an inferior kind of man. Middle-sized, middle-aged, with a firm weathered face, a square jaw and clear eyes, he had quite a position in Shau Ki Wan harbour, for he was a member of the committee of the Shau Ki Wan Dragon Boat Club, which runs a dragon boat in the famous race on the 5th day of the 5th moon.

His two boats were tied up alongside each other, one run by Lai Ng and the other by his four sons. We climbed on to the former and were seated cross-legged on a mat amidships facing a very old, old man. With his immobile face and his white beard and enormous belly he looked like one of the pottery figures the Chinese make so well.

This was Lai Yee Sze, father of Lai Ng, and 84 years of age. Poor old man, his eyes were bleared and watery, and his feet swollen and painful, and he spent his days sitting on a mat cross-legged under the hooped shelter, and slept stretched out on the same small place each night. But he was the father and honoured by his sons, his sons' sons and their children, and waited on by the women. There were 20 family members on the two sampans. Around us peering from the tiny shelter behind us were Ng's wife, two sons, two daughters-in-law and two grandchildren. The women wore silver ornaments, for purse-seiners are not so well off. No less than four generations in one little boat, putting to sea each night, sailing only two hours' distance out to their fishing grounds, and returning each morning to spend much of the day in sleep.

They use bright kerosene lamps to attract the fish. As the fish approach, the two boats with the seine net between them begin encircling the lighted area. At the same time the fishermen thrash the water with long-handled beaters to frighten the fish into the net. When the circle is completed the net is drawn up and the catch placed in the hold. How many who eat the silly

fish next day reflect on the moral of the attraction of bright lights?

It is a hard life. Ng's ambition is to buy another pair of boats, 'but most of my savings go in buying gear and at present I am in debt to money-lenders'.

I talked to the old man about the past. He had been born in Hong Kong while the Colony was yet young, and so had his father—here at Shau Ki Wan—before the British occupation. The father was no doubt a pirate, for Hong Kong is said to have been only a pirates' lair before we came. 'A gentleman's trade in those days', said that grand old man of Hong Kong, Sir Shouson Chow, with his rich chuckle, as he walked me around the beautiful garden, so much of which he has planted with his own hands. He is 90 and there was something of a facial resemblance between the two old men. Perhaps it was because they wore the same kind of beard. 'I think my ancestors were pirates', Sir Shouson had said. His home had been at Stanley, another pirates' lair, and he still keeps a villa there. 'They robbed the rich and helped the poor. They rarely killed and they never took everything off you.'

Though one is rich and one is poor, Sir Shouson and Yee Sze would have got on well together, for Sir Shouson has never lost the common touch and is much beloved by all who know him.

I asked Yee Sze what changes he thought were greatest since he was a boy.

'Why,' he said, 'Causeway Bay and all that part was just a hill when I was young.'

'And which is better, Hong Kong now or then?'

'Then, of course', said Yee. 'In those days the English treated the fishing people very well. Now it's money, then it was friendship.' Questions elicited that he meant that the increased controls of today led to increased 'squeeze'.

I tried to get him to admit that there might be some advantage today, but he wouldn't have it. 'You were much freer in the old days. Now there are many, many more people. There were pirates, of course, but then they only took money and didn't kill or hurt anybody. Now they use firearms and shoot to kill. People were more honest in those days', he added. 'They weren't so cunning as they are today. And there used to be more religion. Now some of the fishing people have become Christians

(about 20 per cent, I was told). Their minds are not in God,' he finished up, 'and the moderns do not respect the gods as we did. They don't care for anything.'

And on the little boat, in a recess under the floor of the shelter behind us, was a neat, clean, well-cared-for shrine full of brightly painted idols with their offerings before them. Prominent among them was the Queen of Heaven, who still cares for sailors.

Small, and with rather large spectacles, looking as if he needed taking care of, Wilkie Wu, Inspector of Fisheries, is, on the contrary, a very competent person and an enthusiast at his job. There is nothing of the individualist about him and in that respect he is a very unChinese Chinese, but he is completely Chinese in his kindness and courtesy. He, and others—quite a few of them—demonstrated that the Chinese *can* have that interest in their neighbours' welfare which was never needed in the world more than today. Although fisheries absorbed his working hours, his spare time was given to welfare work. His mother, with whom he lives (for he is not married), says to him 'Now, Wai Kay (which is his real name), why can't you stay at home in the evenings? Why do you always have to be minding other people's business? Oh, my dear son, you should stay at home after long hours of work!'

'I'm your son,' says Wilkie in reply, 'but I'm also a son of the world. I owe it duties, too.'

He told us of some of his adventures during the occupation. He had been helping an elderly missionary couple, Mr. and Mrs. Wells. On the fateful Christmas Day of the surrender he set off for their house, calling first at his office to collect all his money, which he had left there. He was going up a narrow road to the Wells's house when he was stopped and searched by Japanese soldiers, who took all his money away. 'I stood for half an hour', he said, 'against the wall—too dazed and upset to move.' On reaching the house Mr. Wells opened the door and his first words were 'Did you get here safely? I was set on by four Chinese coolies and robbed of everything'. Wilkie had not the heart to tell his story but almost in tears said 'I'm all right'. When the order went round that all Europeans were to be interned Wilkie gave his iron camp-bed to Mrs. Wells, but it needed a screwdriver and pincers to put it up, so he tried to smuggle these to them wearing a long-sleeved Chinese robe.

THE BOAT PEOPLE

However, he was searched and the things taken away, and he of course was in some danger as anyone helping Europeans was under suspicion. 'But if you're trying to do good', said Wilkie, 'God will help you.'

Wilkie supervises the ten fishery syndicates in the Colony, all of them dependent upon the Government Fish Wholesale Marketing organization with its central markets at Kennedy Town on Hong Kong Island and Tai Po in the New Territories. The fishermen bring their catches to one of the syndicates and then they are transported free to market by the organization. Wilkie took us to see the Shau Ki Wan syndicate and when we arrived a special bonus of rice was being issued. The syndicates not only sell a fisherman's catch for him but perform other essential services. They run schools for his children, make loans and advances to him, and sell him tung oil, fish-hooks and other primary needs. They also have canteens and discussion groups at which subjects connected with fishing are debated. For all their services the syndicates take 6 per cent of the money which the fish fetch at auction.

Fishermen and indeed many Chinese do not like banks. If a fisherman receives large sums in cash he will, like the farmer, bank it in gold ornaments or in gold bars. Wilkie told us of a boat which was robbed and of the owner reporting the loss—and it was a dead loss—of 37 taels of gold at £18 15s. a tael. Nor do they ever insure. 'In fact,' said Wilkie, 'Chinese don't like insuring. I've never insured my flat or my furniture.' When one considers how quickly the Chinese take to anything modern of which the advantage is obvious, this aversion to banks and insurance is strange.

Upstairs, above the syndicate's office, a competent young woman was conducting the school, two classes with ages from 7 to 14 in which boys outnumbered girls by three to one. Their education is liable to interruption because, unless the parents can find someone ashore to look after them, they may have to take them away from school when they go to sea.

Although more and more vessels are being motorized, the sentimental may take comfort from the fact that only one in a thousand of Hong Kong's junks are so far motorized, and that the graceful junk, no more than the dhow, is hardly likely to disappear from Eastern seas for many long years.



‘On the day of the marriage the bridegroom’s parents send the bride’s chair draped with red silk. In this she is carried to her future home’ (p. 98)



‘The neatest of all was Lai’s first wife.’ Lai Kwong Chan’s wife and grandson on the junk’ (p. 189)



Lai Sze. ‘A very old man, he looked like one of the pottery figures the Chinese make so well’ (p. 193)



Aberdeen Harbour. 'It was not some homesick Scot who so christened it: it was named after Lord Aberdeen who was Foreign Secretary from 1841 to 1850' (p. 46)



‘At the club for shoe-shine boys run by the Jesuit Fathers of Wah Yan College, the boys get some schooling’ (p. 211)



Dinner time at the shoe-shine boys’ club. ‘These small urchins are a feature of Hong Kong’s crowded streets’ (p. 211)

PLATE XXXII

Everybody who has visited a shipyard comes away with a sense of romance. It may come from the thought of the tiny men hanging and clanging high up on the steel sides of some great giant destined to face fair weather and foul on the world's oceans. Maybe there is even more romance and colour about Eastern shipyards: dhows being built on the hard at Maala in Aden, or junks on the beach at Tai Kok Tsui on the Kowloon side at Hong Kong. Here there are no architects' blue-prints, simply craftsmen reproducing beautiful lines of ancient types of ships, partly perhaps by some sort of hereditary instinct, but mostly no doubt in the hard way they have learnt from their fathers.

Tai Kok Tsui is a very poor quarter, with wooden and tin shanties all higgledy-piggledy, and sampans and junks being built in sheds, at the back of which the craftsmen's families live. Here vessels of all sorts are being built. There are long liner sailing junks called Tin Teng, with sharp bows, broad stern and rounded hull; Hong Kong sailing trading junks, Pak Hoi, about 45 feet long and 15 feet broad, flat-bottomed vessels with pointed bow and almost pointed stern; brightly painted Chin Chau and east coast trading junks, banana-shaped vessels with a rough but sturdy finish, as well as smaller craft such as shrimp boats, Ha Teng, and small fishing boats, Ma Lan Teng, which are almost the babies of Hong Kong craft, being only 18 feet long. They are very wide, however, flat-bottomed, and operated purely as family concerns by three or four people in shallow water.

We watched a sampan being built by one man. It was carvel-built of cheap pine from the East River. The builder told us that single-handed he would take 12 or 13 days, though when he had a mate he could finish one in seven days. His conversation was punctuated by sure, swift blows on great nails which had been manufactured in the factory near by. His family sat round a table on stools at the back of the sampan, and the wall of the shed was covered with red paper charms. The god of the earth was in his place under another table, and there were vases with paper flowers, a bowl with joss-sticks, a pack of cards, and enamel rice bowls neatly stacked on the table.

It was a busy neighbourhood and as noisy as all Hong Kong. Next door three men sat hammering at shallow iron frying-pans.

THE BOAT PEOPLE

Down the narrow, muddy lane there were numbers of women on low stools sorting out coal from piles of stone and shells dredged from the harbour. This deep-sea mining is quite an industry in this area and they had salvaged a considerable quantity of saleable pieces.

The pleasant, pungent odour in the next shed we visited told us that part at least of the vessel being built there was made of camphor wood, which apparently is as little liked by sea-borers as it is by land insects. The master builder of this large junk said it would cost £1,750 and take 10 men six weeks to complete. Then there would be a launching ceremony. Beautifully carved on its stern in large characters was its name, *The Moon shines on the Golden Boat*. Realists though the Chinese are, they are also poets.

It was difficult to reconcile the appearance of poverty with all this prosperous-looking industry, but perhaps the margins of profit are small. Again I wondered whether material comfort means a lot to Chinese. The smallest cubby-hole was used not only to sleep and eat in but to turn out something saleable. Cooking for the most part was done on chatties outside the miserable hovels, and there were many living on sampans that were just afloat in the dirty, stinking water. These sampans looked beyond any possible service except that of affording a poor shelter. Even cigarette ends were being collected by children in order to sell the tobacco.

Yet poor though these people might be, one felt that these craftsmen were putting more than hereditary skill and well-chosen timber into their work for the money they earned. Consciously or unconsciously, they were building not only stout ships to sail beyond the waters of Hong Kong harbour, but factories to produce food for thousands, and homes in which men and women were to live, and in which children would be born and brought up to sail in other ships. The Junk and the Dhow may look to the uninitiated 'like anyhow', but they are not. And as far as I could see, the essential difference between the building of the two lay in the speed with which junks are completed. I never saw Arab boat-builders work at such a speed.

PART THREE

*WELFARE AND
MANAGEMENT*

The Care of the People—the Young

I HAVE NEVER been so conscious of the struggle for existence as I was in Hong Kong. The sight of the close-packed millions moving in a restricted area brings home how great is the task for each of them to find sufficient of the wherewithal to pay for food and bodily necessities. The mere business of keeping alive is a continuous problem for the majority of them.

The care of a vast organism such as Hong Kong, obviously so vulnerable to shortages of food and water and to disease and disorder, is plainly a task fraught with great and insistent anxieties to its Government, which few of the population can appreciate.

Government's care of the people starts at the beginning. A visit to the maternity wards of the Kwong Wah hospital was a strange and stirring experience. As Sister Agnes, the charming Chinese matron who has been decorated for war services, opened the great swing-doors a sound like the wind-borne mewling of seagulls floated forth. Before me stretched a long vista of white beds and cots, with neat, trim, white-clad, white-masked Chinese nurses flitting between them. There was an impression of visiting the corner of Heaven in which are to be found all the babies waiting to be born. In fact, of course, it was a stage or two later in the proceedings, but the babies were yet on the threshold of that world of struggle which is Hong Kong.

The mewling arose from dozens of new-born citizens of the most numerous race on earth, with all their troubles before them, bemoaning their advent into this difficult world. It was a large ward with the beds close together. Each bed contained a mother, some contained two. At the foot of each bed was a net-covered cot, or where appropriate two, and in each cot I saw a tiny puckered face. Apart from the wards, there were mothers in beds and babies in cots in the passages, in the store-rooms, even in the kitchens. Everywhere was spotlessly clean.

It was mass production with a vengeance. Turning to Matron I remarked that it was the busiest factory I had seen in Hong

THE CARE OF THE YOUNG

Kong. She smiled. 'A short time ago we had our record figure of 40 babies in 24 hours.'

What the annual turn-out of babies coming off the assembly line in this hospital is I do not know, but it must be considerable, for normal cases—the vast majority—stay in only four to five days. Hong Kong produced 47,475 babies in 1948, which was its highest figure ever. The number rose steadily from 20,886 in 1934 to 45,000 in 1941. Then the war upset things and production did not get under way again till 1946, when the number was 31,098. It rose to 42,473 in 1947.

Numbers like these must have overtaxed the medical resources of the Colony, but Hong Kong appears to be able to take it. In 1948 no fewer than 46,384 of these babies were ushered into the world by doctors and midwives, and 36,264 of them were born in hospitals and maternity homes—the total number of maternity beds is 324, so they must have been in continuous occupation. The figures denote a tremendous achievement, probably unequaled by any other colony, but they at once stimulate the question how many of these babies survived in the



'A vista of white beds and cots' (p. 201)

appallingly overcrowded conditions. The answer is no less startling. In 1935 the mortality of infants under one year was 617 a thousand. In 1940, the year before the war, it was 327 a thousand. In 1948, with Hong Kong more crowded than ever before and its services not fully restored, infantile mortality had been reduced to 91.1 a thousand.

Some idea of how such a result has been achieved can be had by a visit to the Harcourt Health Centre. Here one morning we watched a Chinese nurse with a borrowed baby demonstrating to a class of intent young mothers, with babies swathed in red quilted bags on their backs, how to bath a month-old infant. The behaviour of the model was perfect. Layer after layer of clothes was peeled off, and it was washed, towelled and powdered with hardly an expostulatory sound. We were told by Miss Burne, who is in charge of Infant Welfare Clinics, that Chinese mothers and babies are remarkably clean—only one case of nits had ever been seen in the Centre. But it is difficult to persuade mammas that layers of quilted clothing are not necessary in the tropics.

In another room another Chinese nurse was demonstrating how an almost weaned child should be fed. She had a cardboard clock on the table, and a piece of green hessian hung over a blackboard. The clock hands were put to the times of meals and coloured cut-outs of the foods suitable to be given were stuck on the hessian. There were, for instance, appetizing-looking pictures of tomatoes and tomato juice, oranges and orange juice, foods for a midday meal such as fish, various vegetables, and so on. The nurse repeated her demonstration until each mother could tell her what food to put on the hessian when the clock pointed to twelve, or what time the clock should show when tomatoes appeared on the hessian. There was no milk, for it is too scarce.

Of course nothing like all the young mothers who pass through the overworked maternity beds have the benefit of these classes at health centres. There are three Government Infant Welfare Centres and in 1949 they had nearly 100,000 attendances. At the time of our visit there were approximately 16,000 infants under two years of age in regular attendance.

As Miss Burne said, the service is as yet 'only scratching on the surface'. There is a crying need for expansion, but without

further facilities and staff the demand cannot be met. Nevertheless, infant welfare teaching sections now function in dispensary buildings of the outer districts, and a great deal is also done by the Society for the Protection of Children. This Society started as a branch of the S.P.C.C., but the name was changed, for the Chinese said there was no cruelty to children. It runs a baby clinic where infants are bathed and given free powdered milk, and the mothers advised on their care.

These services cover children from birth to two years of age. It has not yet been possible to start toddler clinics, and less is therefore done for children between two and school age.

Schoolchildren

Any weekday morning, between 8 and 9, along many of Hong Kong's less populated streets, the clatter of young feet and the chatter of young voices are common sounds as thousands of children hurry along to school. Out of tenements or luxury flats, off ferries, trams and buses, pour thousands of boys and girls from every type of home. There is no 'creeping like snail', for the children of Hong Kong are always eager to get into their classrooms. The predominant impression is bright blue, for most school uniforms are either blue jeans over white blouses, or blue pyjamas, or blue tunics. Each boy and each girl carries a Hong Kong basket, though the more fortunate ones have amahs to carry them.

Assuming that about a tenth of the population are of school age, one can take it that there are about 225,000 in that category, and in 1950 there were 147,000 children of all ages in school. Hong Kong's primary schools, however, do not yet cope with children beyond the age of 12 or 13, and out of 200,000 who are between 5 and 12-13, there are 120,000 in school.* The attendance of Chinese children is 97 per cent: the lowest attendance is that of Indians with 91 per cent. A place in a school is something highly prized and greatly sought after. It is interesting to read in a school magazine what the boys of a

* At the end of 1950 Government was maintaining or subsidizing 340 schools, 20 grant-aided schools run mainly by missionary bodies, and 29 directly under the charge of the Education Department. At that time there were 162,000 in primary and secondary schools and it was thought possible that the total number of children not in school was about 50,000.

VARIETY OF SCHOOLS

class which could not attend assembly in the hall, as it was not large enough to hold everyone, had to say: 'We do not envy the upper classes (who attended Assembly) because this arrangement gives us 20 minutes more of valuable instructions from our class-masters, who keep us company.' And another class bemoaned that classrooms are locked during recess because 'it does seem rather senseless to stand about the playground wasting precious time'.

Schools in Hong Kong are classified as Government schools, Grant schools, Subsidized schools, Military schools and others exempted from the provisions of the Education Ordinance, and Private schools. All schools, unless specially exempted, must register with the Director of Education and comply with the regulations made under the Education Ordinance of 1913. There is a Board of Education with seven official and eleven unofficial members.*

The classification of the schools, however, gives no idea of the variety to be found among them. There are one-roomed schools: there are schools in tenements: there are schools which are as good and in some cases better equipped than anything to be found in this country. All schools are full: many are crowded. And into whatever schools one goes, one has the same impression of countless little heads busily bowed over desks, in an industrious way quite unusual in the West.

Many things are similar to those found in Western schools, but there are differences, some of them peculiar to Hong Kong. Ordinarily when a visitor enters a classroom the children rise. I was startled on visiting a school in West Africa when the little naked children immediately got up, crouched behind their desks and clapped softly. In Hong Kong the children rose, put their hands together and bowed in a traditional Chinese fashion. Then there was the method of writing. It was fascinating to watch small hands delicately holding a Chinese brush upright between their fingers and drawing characters in their copy-books. Or to see a class skilfully clicking the beads of an abacus, working out the sums set out for them on a giant abacus used by the teacher to demonstrate the system. Not every school teaches the use of the abacus, but many use it as well as the

* In 1951 the Board consisted entirely of unofficial members with the Director of Education as chairman.

Western system of arithmetic, for the abacus is in common use all over Hong Kong in Government offices and in shops.

There are few schools which have kindergartens because there are few parents who can afford to send their children to them. But one of the most attractive we saw was at the Ying Wah girls' school run by the London Missionary Society, the Society to which Morrison belonged. The school was founded in 1900. There were two young Chinese teachers playing singing-games with entrancing four- and five-year-olds, prettily and well dressed, whose parents belonged to the better-off 'white collar' classes. In the higher forms the girls came from very mixed homes and some of the parents had to sacrifice a good deal to send them to school. No father wants his daughter to do manual work once she has been to school, so those who do not matriculate usually become shop girls or junior clerks.

There is also a Church Missionary Society school with a Chinese headmistress, and a great number of convent schools. One of these which we saw was the Precious Blood School, which under the calm and gentle Sister Lui breathes an atmosphere of unhurried orderliness. All the nuns are Chinese, but only a small percentage of the girls are Christians. Then there is the Maryknoll convent school run by American Foreign Mission Sisters of St. Dominic. This school can only be described as *de luxe*. It is beautifully housed and equipped, and the 691 girls, of whom again only about a third are Christians, work in an atmosphere of peace, culture, and simple but good living.

Another of the 'best' schools for girls is the True Light Middle School. Here no perms are allowed (most Chinese girls have permed heads), and queues of amahs sit knitting and sewing while waiting for their charges to be released. Each week emphasis is laid on a particular virtue—cleanliness, frugality, friendship, and so on. In the school yard a young and pretty P.T. instructress was taking a class which had barely enough room to do the exercises. Playgrounds and playing-fields are one of the big needs and almost everywhere the head masters and mistresses bemoaned the lack of them.

In contrast to these well-equipped schools, there was the one-room Confucian school run by Fung Ki Cheuk, a grey-gowned, straggly-bearded Chinese of the old school. He and a woman teacher instruct some 44 boys and girls in the 'three religions'

and as the fees are very low the school is attended by poor children. One child lived on a broken-down sampan ashore; another, who said his father sold pigs' entrails, shared two bunks with his parents, a baby sister, and grannie.

In Hennessy Road, another poor and very crowded district, there is an excellent Government primary school, which had taken only 13 weeks to build. Like so many Hong Kong schools, it runs two sessions, and also adult evening classes. Fees are low and pupils must be children of industrial workers or coolies. Most of them come from bedspace homes and many work during out-of-school hours.

The Gold and Silver Exchange Association, whose activities we watched in an earlier chapter, run a school for poor children. It was only opened in 1949 and is very modern and on a grand scale. A school like this is of course in great contrast to the tenement type, but among the latter there were many which were very alive, and one of them, the Tuen Ching at Wanchai, interested me because here for the first time I found an attempt to encourage Chinese art. In most of the schools drawing had become westernized, but in the Tuen Ching there were two art masters, Chinese and 'foreign'. The former had studied under Ko Kei Fung, a famous Canton artist, and the latter had been to the Canton provincial art college. It was interesting to compare the results of their different methods of teaching. I felt that much more was achieved when the children and their teachers were expressing themselves in their own tradition than when the children were using an alien one, perhaps imperfectly comprehended by their teachers.

The oldest boys' college in Hong Kong is Queen's College, founded as the Government Central School in 1862. 'He comes from Queen's College' was as good as saying 'He's an Etonian', and the College has sent out boys all over China. The original buildings were destroyed during the Japanese occupation, but it was hoped to complete the new Queen's College by September 1950. Then there is La Salle boys' college run by Christian Brothers. They too have lost their building, requisitioned as a military hospital, and the 900 boys were housed in wooden huts when we went round. Brother Patrick, the head master, showed us the well-equipped library, laboratories, geography room and classrooms, but he had no great opinion of his pupils. He would

fling open the door of a classroom and say in a loud, cheerful tone 'A heavy lot, these', or 'A dumb lot', or perhaps 'One or two bright ones here'. The boys took it all smilingly.

A noteworthy school with a distinct atmosphere of its own is St. Stephen's College at Stanley. It is unique in being the last school of its kind to remain outside the Government Grant-in-aid scheme and is also regarded as an 'Eton'. The Chinese gentlemen who founded it in 1903, such men as Sir Kai Ho Kai, a distinguished surgeon, who also presented the Alice Memorial Hospital to the Colony in memory of his English wife, and Dr. S. W. Tso, both of them also among the founders of the University, sought the help of the Church Missionary Society in their venture, and its education is on a Christian basis. Both these men had been educated at English schools and they wanted to found a school in Hong Kong with the same sort of outlook. In keeping up this tradition the staff, some of whom are English University men, and the college council, a number of them Old Boys, have been very successful, and the boys, 240 of them in the college and 160 in the preparatory school, are very like English schoolboys in their outlook and ways. The school includes a number of distinguished local Chinese amongst its Old Boys, as well as such men as Dr. Foo Ping Sheung, for five years Chinese Ambassador to Moscow, and Dr. 'Jimmy' Yen, the great pioneer in mass education. Indeed, so distinguished are its former alumni that a parent is said to have asked if Confucius were not an Old Boy! It is also sometimes believed that Dr. Sun Yat-Sen was, but in fact he was at Queen's College. The only strange differences between this school and its English counterparts of which I heard were that the boys sometimes complained of too few hours of work and too much *sung* (food to go with rice) at meals!

King George V is a Government school intended originally for British children, but since the war it has not been confined to them though there is a stiff entrance examination in English. It is now very international with Chinese, Portuguese, British, American, Russian, Dutch, French, German, Norwegian, Swiss, Belgian, Czechoslovakian and Persian pupils. The Chinese, however, appear to walk away with most of the prizes. 'I wondered when I should see an English face', said the lady who had been giving away prizes on one occasion.

CHILDREN'S CLUBS

The children living in the New Territories are not neglected, although in general the schools are not so well housed and equipped as in the cities. Near Yuen Long, however, there are two new and well-built schools, one being due to the enterprise of the local elders who collected \$100,000 towards it. There are about 200 schools in the rural areas, 194 of them being subsidized, and most of them consisting of one room.

A great deal of the success of all these schools is due to the Northcote Training College and the Rural Training College. The former caters largely for city schools and has many applicants. The latter is in the New Territories and is responding to the urgent need for teachers in rural schools. Mr. Wong, the principal, is a very delightful and human person who loves farming and reading Horace. He has discovered how well they go together.

There are of course thousands of children in Hong Kong who are not fortunate enough to find a place in a school. The drabness of their lives in Hong Kong's dismal tenements needs no emphasis. Some of these children are lucky enough to be able to attend the Children's Clubs, and it is a moving experience to be present at the Yaumati Welfare Centre, used as a club in the evenings, when the children come for their classes. They arrive in their rags and tatters with happy faces of anticipation. They shed their clothes, have a wash, and put on the clean khaki suits or dresses provided for them. They come bustling back to the classrooms and eagerly sit down at the desks in good order. There is no wasting of time. Small baskets or parcels are opened and they bring out their bowls and chopsticks, and perhaps artificial flowers, which some of them make in their spare time at home to augment the family budget. The leaders take their places behind three great cauldrons of hot steaming food, and the other children queue up for their helpings. From No. 1 cauldron comes rice, No. 2 produces cooked tomatoes in a sauce, and No. 3 dried fish heads. Each child's bowl is piled high. Despite their hunger the children are beautifully mannered and tidy eaters. They wait while one of them comes to the front, bows three times to the club leader, a woman teacher, turns and bows to her clubmates, and says a long grace. Then they get down to business. Every grain is carefully cleaned up and the empty bowls are little trouble to wash. There follows class

work, lessons in the three R's, and instruction is absorbed as eagerly as food.

The Social Welfare Department does much to encourage these clubs, but much is also done by philanthropic volunteers, such as Mr. U Tat Chee. He and others each guarantee £6 a month. The real work of these clubs of course depends entirely on the young men and women who give up their evenings and often their week-ends to club work. A visit to a centre like Yaumati quickly convinces a visitor that work of this kind is so very much worth while in the tremendous dividends of human happiness which it gives for small outlay. One is left in no doubt that these children look forward to this brief evening interlude as the one great time in their day, and work of this nature undoubtedly saves many children from becoming juvenile delinquents.

One had the same sort of worth-while feeling at a Salvation Army club in Wanchai. This was intended for teen-age boys and girls, and was opened for an hour or so in the late evening in a room that belonged to a school. The boys were playing badminton, the girls ping-pong, but there was also a mixed team playing Chinese shuttlecock, a game of skill which makes for agile feet. Some of these young people go to the Salvation Army school, some are unlicensed hawkers. I was greatly struck with their leader, a young married man of about 30. He had a good square jaw and gave an impression of quiet and confident power. At first as we looked round he paid little attention to us and seemed rather the inscrutable Chinese. When, however, I told him how impressed I was with the club and said what a great deal of good I thought such work did, his face lit up as he expanded enthusiastically on what had to be done to brighten the lives of youth in Hong Kong. I found him a very impressive young man. He belonged to the same class as the boys and girls of the club, but his qualities of leadership were obvious.

There are many such clubs in Hong Kong, but there are not nearly enough of them. The Boys' Club at Stanley is a resident club started in 1945 as a holiday camp for affiliated Boys' Clubs. Here again there is an excellent spirit among the 134 boys and their leaders. As well as receiving schooling, the lads are apprenticed to various trades, and no boy leaves the club until a job is found for him.

JUVENILE WELFARE

Excellent work is being done at the Reformatory attached to Stanley Prison. Much credit is due to the Commissioner of Prisons and his staff for the success of this school. Distressed at the number of juvenile offenders being committed to prison, and having nowhere else to keep them except the prison, the Commissioner took over some unoccupied warehouses near by and turned them into a reformatory, thus presenting Government with a *fait accompli*. Government could have wished for nothing better. The place was speedily legalized and a first-class warder, with a real mission for work amongst such boys, put in charge. He has inculcated a spirit of responsibility into these boys and few indeed show signs of recidivist tendencies. For the most part they seem to have all the instincts of decent schoolboys, and here again there is positive evidence of what can be done to save youth for happy, useful lives in overcrowded, overstrained Hong Kong.

Another club is run for Hong Kong's shoe-shine boys, who are a feature of the crowded streets. You see these small urchins, dressed in a variety of uniforms, blacking shoes in a very professional manner. They are allowed to start this work at 12 and have to leave off when they reach 16, so there is not much future in it. They get 20 cents a shine and on a good day will earn several dollars. At their club, run by the Jesuit Fathers of Wah Yan College, they get some schooling and the Fathers help to find them other employment.

All this work is good—first class. The only criticism to be made is that there is not nearly enough of it.

The blind and the deaf and the abandoned are not forgotten. There are two homes for the blind and one for the deaf. Abandoned babies find a happy home in an orphanage at Fan Ling. It is not by any means the only orphanage in Hong Kong, but a visit to it is a delight because its atmosphere shows that it is run in a truly Christian spirit. The home was started in a flat in Kowloon in 1936 under the auspices of the Hong Kong Evangelical Fraternity, but moved to Fan Ling in 1940. It is not housed very commodiously and the 131 children are somewhat cramped, but the toddlers come forward so trustingly, taking you firmly by the fingers to lead you round, that you sense at once the affection that is undoubtedly given to them by the Europeans who run the home, and by the Chinese nurses who

have the care of the babies. Practically all the babies there were found abandoned, and, but for about half a dozen, *all* are girls.

The Tai Po orphanage, also in the New Territories, was founded by the Church Missionary Society. It has an interesting aim, for it trains its orphans of both sexes in farming in order that they may help in the rural reconstruction of China. The first group of boys and girls left Tai Po for a village near Canton in 1948 and quickly adapted themselves to their new environment. They had to clear their own land and build a house, and by 1949 they had five acres under cultivation.

Perhaps one of the best known institutions in Hong Kong is the Po Leung Kuk, the Society for the Preservation of Virtue, founded in 1876 to prevent the kidnapping of women and children. Today this voluntary society runs a large home for problem girls, and young children of both sexes who may be simply in need of care and protection, or delinquents. It is easy to see that a great deal of money has been given and spent on the building. There is a magnificent hall in which visitors may be entertained, or affairs of the Society discussed. Marble tablets bear the names of benefactors, some of whom have their portraits hanging on the walls. It all has an air of solid Sino-Victorian respectability and charity. The rest of the building—the living and working quarters of the inmates—is clean and bare, with an Institutional smell which brought to mind that attractive book *Daddy Long Legs*. The Matron, bright-eyed and tight-lipped, with a bunch of keys dangling at her waist, opened the door of the nursery. A circle of toddlers stood gaping patiently. Each one held a woolly toy, so awkwardly that it seemed as if they were little used to cuddling anything. There were classrooms, and dormitories with iron gates locked at night, ‘for we are afraid girls run away’, said the Matron. ‘We must lock every door—many, many keys’, and she jangled the bunch cheerfully. In an upstairs room older girls sat at looms weaving towels. They had a sullen, unresponsive air and the Matron explained that some were prostitutes, others destitutes, or cases of Mui Tsai.* ‘Little girls and boys good,’ she said, ‘but big girls very bad, very lazy.’ If they are really very bad she has two punishment cells in which they get solitary confinement.

* Old Chinese system of child-sale and domestic slavery.

Most of these girls are not committed for ever to the care of the Po Leung Kuk. Some are sent by an order of the Court for a certain term; others await repatriation to lost families, and quite a number are found husbands. Mr. Fraser, the assistant welfare officer in charge of women and girls, has attended 75 weddings from this institution. The idea of the home, and the very genuine desire to assist young women and children shown by the committee and members of the Society, are indeed more than commendable, but the affection and love that were so apparent in, for instance, the Fan Ling Babies Home is sadly lacking.

In order to prevent Mui Tsai, the legal guardianship of all adopted daughters is automatically vested in the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, and failure to report the possession of an adopted daughter is a criminal offence. Social workers visit the homes of these wards to see that the children are properly cared for and are not made into domestic slaves.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Care of the People—the Adult

LIKE SO MANY British institutions, Hong Kong's University appears to have 'just growned' without any particular missionary aim. Sir James Cantlie started the Hong Kong College of Medicine for Chinese in 1887. Later it dropped the 'for Chinese' to allow the entry of Portuguese and other non-Chinese. It turned out the junior surgeon type who had, for the most part, local practices. In 1910 the idea of a University was mooted and in due course the College of Medicine became a Faculty of the University. Today this Faculty is still the biggest. The University has had its ups and downs, including financial crises, and indeed it was having one of the latter when I visited it. Its whole history has been one of struggle with insufficient staff and funds. Though it is a separate body, it relies on the Hong Kong Government for its support. Its annual

Government grant is 1½ million dollars and the rest of its 2½ million odd income is made up of rather more than a quarter of a million dollars interest on investments and fees. Since the war the University has had to build up from the bottom. Laboratories, classrooms and living hostels have all had to be rebuilt, and the scars of war were still evident in the ruins of the Great Hall and Students' Union. The University has done a tremendous job in reconstruction, but comparing those ruins with all that has been rebuilt in other spheres suggested again that cash counts for more than culture in the mind of Hong Kong.

In 1950 there were 629 students, of whom a third were women. There were proportionately many more from China than there were pre-war because of the political situation. They are accepted on individual merit but must have had a minimum of one successful year in a Chinese University. It is clearly good that many should come from China, and that the University should thus have an opportunity of disseminating more liberal thought into China. Another useful result of post-war difficulties is that although Chinese naturally overwhelmingly predominate, there is now a sprinkling of many other nationalities. There are English, Canadians, Eurasians, Portuguese, French, Germans, Italians, Pakistanis, Sinhalese, Austrians, Norwegians, and White Russians (which expression reminds me to record that Communist intellectuals in Hong Kong are now referring to Shanghai refugees as White Chinese!)

The present situation in China presents the University with a challenge of no mean order. Many of the Chinese universities are continuing under the Communists. The teaching of English has been drastically cut down and Russian is starting up. The older members of the staffs are largely leaving and the Communists are concerned with the indoctrination of the younger members.

But although students leave the Hong Kong University with liberal ideas, very few go back to China. They make contacts in Hong Kong during their six years of study and it is only the missionary type who would be prepared to pack up and go into China. It has also to be remembered that there is still a big opening for doctors in Hong Kong, and if the population keeps at its present level the Colony is not likely to be saturated with doctors for a generation or two. It takes time to turn out doctors,

FACTORY CONDITIONS

economists, and teachers of English, and this emphasizes the need for meeting the University's wants quickly. There should be men of these qualifications ready to step into China when the need and want for them occur.

There is only one Government Technical College, although the Aberdeen Industrial School, run by Salesian Brothers, turns out excellent craftsmen. The Technical College trains boys for many trades and turns out civil engineers, mechanical and electrical engineers, wireless operators, carpenters, draughtsmen, clerks of works, and so on.

For the most part the craftsman, the artisan and the factory worker learn their trades as apprentices. Sometimes they are apprenticed to the firm or the 'boss', sometimes they are taken on by skilled workers who undertake, for a consideration, to teach them the trade. As factories of all kinds grew and spread throughout Hong Kong it became necessary for Government to provide by legislation for the protection of employees. All factories or workshops employing more than 20 persons or using power-driven machinery must be registered. Children under 14 may not be employed, and women or young persons under 16 may not be set to work in any trade styled as dangerous. Hours of employment of young persons and women are regulated, and the usual precautions against accidents are enforced. A staff of men and women labour inspectors is constantly visiting factories of all types, some of which are modern and up to date, where the employers are only too willing to look after the welfare of their employees, but others are housed in overcrowded, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated quarters with little consideration for the workers.

In the modern factories, both European- and Chinese-owned, the employers are prepared to recognize the 48-hour week, which was the standard set by Government in 1948 for all its manual workers, but a great many factory workers sit at their benches or stand at their machines for at least nine hours a day for a seven-day week, and in many cases 12 hours a day. Long hours are of course particularly prevalent where employment is at piece rates.

Going round some of the factories inquiring into the home background of employees soon shows that the hours of tedious work are for the most part cheerfully undertaken simply to get enough to eat. The idea of earning in order to have pleasurable

leisure hours as well as the necessities of life is scarcely thought of. That long hours are fairly common is shown in a survey of garment-making factories; nine of these worked an 11-hour day; one a 13-hour day for women and 14 for men, two a 10½-hour day, one a 10-hour, three 9½, three 9 hours, and only in two was there an 8-hour day. Most factories have a seven-day week and no holidays with pay except for those on a monthly wage, usually a minority of the workers. Labour Officers have found that in general there is a feeling of resentment among the workers if any attempt is made to get the management to shorten the hours. For one thing so many of them are on piece work, and for another, it is said that Chinese workers prefer long hours at a slower tempo to shorter, more concentrated hours. Nevertheless, a continued and steady attempt is made by the Labour Officers and Factory Inspectors to see that the strain is not too great on the workers, and that the regulations concerning the hours of work for young persons and women are obeyed.

Ventilation, lighting, and seating arrangements are other things that have always to be watched, especially in the tenement-type factory. Walking round with Mrs. Allinson (who was one of the guests at Rosa Hui's party), you will see her stop and ask a girl if she is comfortably seated at her machine, whether she needs a foot-rest, and so on. Often pregnant women are working and inquiries are made about the care that will be taken of them; generally the employers grant maternity leave without pay. Quite a number of mothers have their babies brought to the factory by grandmamma or a friend for their feeding times, and the management usually is willing for the mother to leave her bench to see to her baby.

Another regulation that is not infrequently forgotten by the poorer type of factory owner is the fencing of machinery, and this again has to be carefully watched by a Labour Inspector. Prosecutions for this and other offences are only proceeded with after warnings and advice have been ignored several times.

Mrs. Allinson made a survey among a number of women employed in different factories to find out something of their home background. Among 68 working in weaving-mills, 32 were single, 25 married and 11 widows. The single women either lived with and helped to support their parents, or were sharing

cubicles with friends, often sending money to relatives in the country. Most of the married women were working from economic necessity, and in some cases they were working in order to pay their children's school fees. Though this is a very small selection, it is fairly typical. It is rare to find that any of the young girls have been to school, and few seemed to have any ideas about how to spend their leisure time except in doing housework. They would only giggle when asked if they went to the cinema or had boy friends, but every one of them spent some of her precious earnings on having a 'perm'.

It was a sight to be on factory premises when the midday bell rang. With one accord every operator downed tools and made a dash for the exits. The men, unless they were being fed on the premises, quickly congregated round cooked-food stalls or hawkers in the neighbourhood, but practically all the women poured into the street, clattering in their wooden shoes along the pavement, speeding home to have as much time for their dinner as possible. One of a number of improvements Mrs. Allinson would like to see brought in is canteens for the women. Another is the extension of schools and day nurseries in working-class districts. But one of her dreams was nearing fulfilment when I was in Hong Kong: this was a youth centre for the young persons of the factories, where they could find something profitable and amusing to do during their leisure hours.

Unions, guilds, and societies of various kinds have long existed among the workers of Hong Kong. Just prior to the war many of these unions were growing in strength and showing a capacity for reasonable negotiation, but the organizations collapsed during the occupation and in the post-war period they came under political influences. Some were controlled by the Kuomintang, others by the Communists, and they became more of a political weapon than unions for the benefit of employers and employees. In 1947 a Labour Officer came out to advise and assist in building up sound trade unions and the Trade Union Ordinance was published in 1948. In 1949 there were 259 unions registered with a total membership of 146,761. They are always increasing and it is particularly noticeable that more and more women are joining them.

There is also a Labour Advisory Board which was recently reconstituted to have equal numbers of employers' and workers'

representatives. But the very Left-wing unions are not co-operative and are much under the influence of Communist propaganda. Government, however, continued its endeavours to encourage the less political and sounder trade unionists, and has been successful, in one important instance at least, in convincing workers that arbitration is better than striking.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Housing and Health

AFTER THE LIBERATION the problem of housing became difficult at once, but as the Colony recovered and its population increased the shortage became more and more evident. The subject was much debated in the Legislative Council and there was a good deal of criticism of Government for not doing more to encourage private enterprise. In July 1946 old ordinances which had had the effect of prohibiting Chinese from living on the Peak and the heights of Cheung Chau Island were repealed: one of the reasons given for this was that it would increase the housing available. Whether it had any real effect in this direction is doubtful, but the act was certainly, as was also stated, in accordance with the spirit of the times.

Far-reaching proposals for improving Hong Kong, Kowloon and the New Territories were made in the Preliminary Planning Report of Sir Patrick Abercrombie in 1948. 'The housing conditions of Hong Kong', he said, 'present the most serious problem in the Colony.' His plan for future housing is calculated on 500 rather than 2,000 to the acre, and in some cases the figure is lower. Rebuilding old and obsolete types of tenements, transferring overcrowded population to other areas, and the removal from the centre of the city of Hong Kong of the naval and military quarters are among his proposals.

In the meantime the part Government plays in the housing of the people is largely limited to control designed to prevent disease and fire. The squatters have presented an exceptional

problem. Some large areas on the outskirts of the cities were set aside for them. Water was laid on, drains built, and on these sites huts had to be built to a specified pattern. Government then cleared the worst and most dangerous squatter colonies and advised those whose huts were demolished that they might rebuild on these approved sites. Most, however, simply moved to fresh sites on the hillsides. One of the reasons given for their lack of enthusiasm for the approved sites was that the standard hut was too expensive to build. But it is curious that there is this lack of enthusiasm, for if you build on one of the approved areas you can do so with some feeling of security. If you build on what is known as a 'tolerated' site you have no certainty when Government will cease to be tolerant and order you off. At King's Park in Kowloon there are some model huts, built on an approved pattern and on an approved site. They are well aligned and quite pleasant, but few of the thousands of squatters appear to be interested in building there, and there are only 47 huts, a number of which are occupied by members of the police force. There is undoubtedly an atmosphere of dull orderliness about the place and the approved-type huts are rather expensive to build. But it was not this, I was told, which kept people away, but their dislike of Government control.

Public-spirited members of the Kowloon Kai Fong Welfare Association, among them Mr. U Tat Chee, have raised money to build a standard type of home primarily for victims of the Kowloon City fire, and these houses, although built on a tolerated site in the Homantin valley, have all been taken up by prospective occupiers. Government encourages these Kai Fongs and other organizations, and at Healthy Village at North Point, one of the approved squatter colonies, there is a committee of 17 which looks after the general affairs of the village. But here again there is a certain amount of apathy, for of 97 huts occupied only 50 occupiers paid the voluntary contribution of 2s. 6d. a month towards the village funds. It seems that control of any sort, Government or private, is not popular. The chairman of the Healthy Village committee, formerly a minister in Nationalist China, said of his fellow villagers: 'They only like to look after their own property and live in safety and peace'. On the other hand, little has as yet been done officially to guide and encourage squatters to manage their affairs. There seems

to have been a feeling that this would amount to giving them a sense of too great security in settlements which must essentially be regarded as temporary.

Government exercises control over domestic buildings through the Buildings Ordinance, 1935, which provided for improved lighting, ventilation and sanitation. Consequently tenements built since 1935 are a vast improvement on the earlier type. As overcrowding is unavoidable so long as there is more or less unrestricted immigration, Government directs its efforts to keeping the tenements clean and reducing the risk of epidemics. It is a terrific undertaking. There is the impossibility of eliminating T.B. and the dangers from rats and flies. Every so many yards along the main streets there are tin boxes into which the residents drop their dead rats, and some 13,000 a month are collected from them. Every three or four months each row of tenements is washed down from top to bottom by the Health Department. It is a most astonishing sight to see. Those who live on the ground floors bring all their furniture and belongings out into the street. Those living on upper storeys pile their goods into the centre of the floor. When the hosepipes, scrubbing-brushes and pails have departed, the floors, staircases, verandahs, and street outside seem as though visited by a cloudburst, and a pleasant, healthy smell of disinfectant greets the householder as he gradually carries back his belongings. Owing to these and other health efforts there has been no cholera in the Colony since 1947, and plague, which is endemic in the north, has been to all intents and purposes banished from Hong Kong.

But the problem of tuberculosis remains. It accounts for 14.6 per cent of deaths and in 1949 the cases of T.B. meningitis were three times more than in 1947, an increase which, as the Director of Medical Services said, was due to the overcrowded tenements which provide 'the most perfect breeding ground for tuberculosis where the risk of infection for small children is tremendous'. Government had one T.B. clinic in 1949 and another was about to be built, but there are also a few branch clinics, mainly of a propaganda value. There were some 480 beds for T.B. in hospitals. Then there is a scheme for a mass X-ray service, health visitors have been trained for the tuberculosis service, and every T.B. sufferer reporting for treatment

VACCINATION SQUADS

has his contacts recorded and every one of them searched out and given advice or treatment. Propaganda against spitting and to encourage other health measures in a campaign against T.B. has been spread by films and posters.

In much of the work done to prevent sickness, Government has found great assistance from the very active St. John Ambulance Brigade. One of its principal activities is running Penetration Squads to carry out vaccinations. These squads, which consist of eight nurses and a doctor, visit islands and out-posts in the New Territories and usually vaccinate about 200 people each week. There is a night and day ambulance service. There are 800 members on the ambulance side, some 300 on the nursing, and 40 doctors; 95 per cent of the members are Chinese and they come from all classes. Some are factory girls who come over to Headquarters for training after their work. Though they are given a uniform they are not even paid their ferry fares, but Mr. Arculli, the Commissioner, said he found no lack of public-spirited people willing to give voluntary service.

The Urban Council exhorts the public by poster to 'keep your city clean'. It has to keep an ever-watchful eye on the cleanliness of markets, cafés, cooked-food stalls, public bath-houses and latrines. The latter are free, but with a true money-making instinct it was not long before a way was found to profit by them. Some of the frequenters just sat on the seats and refused to move until desperation compelled those in need to pay them to get off! The collection of nightsoil is another tremendous undertaking and women are largely employed because it is easier for them to have access to private homes. Government did not like the idea of using women on this work and engaged men instead, but hordes of angry women stormed the Urban Council building and they had to be given back their jobs.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Sick and the Destitute

A VISIT to the out-patients department at the Kowloon Hospital is not only another unforgettable experience, but a demonstration of Chinese need for medical help. A mass of humanity sat, stood, or milled around the large hall. Babies yelled and women raucously shouted at each other in a babel which made normal speech inaudible. In effect, however, order prevailed. People used to queue all night and others would pay able-bodied men 2s. 6d. to stand for them. But this had to be stopped when it was found that girls came along to entertain them. About 1,500 a day were being seen when we visited it.

There are three out-patient clinics and seven dispensaries, dealing with some 32,000 cases a month, in urban areas, and eight outside the cities and in the New Territories, where approximately 11,000 patients are treated each month. Altogether 1,186,885 patients attended the out-patient clinics of all kinds in 1949.

In the Queen Mary Hospital, Hong Kong has one of the best-equipped hospitals in the colonies with a standard equal to that of a large provincial hospital in the United Kingdom. The building surpasses those of some London hospitals. When it was built there were complaints that it was far too big and would prove to be a white elephant. In a very short time it was overfull and had a long waiting-list. It is a teaching hospital and there are about 580 beds. There is a Mass Mini X-Ray used for screening all candidates for Government employment to see if they have T.B., and there is also a blood bank, but generally speaking people are afraid to give their blood as they think that once it has gone it cannot be replaced. There is a very pleasant Nurses' Home and the course for student nurses is the same as in England. There were 80 nurses in training in March 1950, the most that can be accommodated.

Government also runs the Kowloon Hospital with 182 beds, a mental hospital (recognized as being out of date and much below standard), and a few other small hospitals, but it also gives grants to five hospitals, three of which are the Chinese-run

hospitals of the Tung Wah Group—the Tung Wah, the Kwong Wah, and the Tung Wah Eastern. The others assisted by Government are the Nethersole and the Ruttonjee Sanatorium.

The Tung Wah is near the centre of Hong Kong city. It has 459 beds but a great many more patients than beds. It also runs a nurses' training school. There are still a few outward signs of the days when it was a stronghold of Chinese medicine. In the main hall is a large picture of Shun Nung, the first of the herbalists and the god of medicine. At one time it was customary for the doctors to kowtow before his picture, but those days have gone.

The maternity ward seemed strangely quiet after the Kwong Wah, although each bed had a mother. 'How many do you produce a day?' I asked the doctor, to which he rather surprisingly replied, 'It depends according to the season. Near the end of the year there are most'.

In the huge kitchen soya-beans and cabbage were being ladled into enamel dishes of different colours—blue for the T.B. patients—and the Matron told me it cost 3s. a day for three meals for one patient. At the same time this hospital was cooking and distributing 3,000 cattles of rice for the Nationalist soldiers, of whom more later.

At the Kwong Wah in Kowloon, Chinese surgical methods may still be used if the patients prefer them to Western methods. It has 375 beds, and the third of the Tung Wah group, the Tung Wah Eastern in Causeway Bay, has 230 beds, all of them always full.

There are no hospitals in the New Territories but the St. John Ambulance Brigade runs a maternity home at Sha Tin, and Government has a hospital on Cheung Chau Island, which was also originally run by the St. John Ambulance Brigade.

Government maintains a Schools Health Service with three clinics where only schoolchildren are treated. The Service carries out an inspection of all schools, but only 17,000 of the schoolchildren are seen by doctors and nurses. They are in Government and Government-assisted schools.

Leprosy has become rather a problem. Up till recently lepers were maintained by the Hong Kong Government in a leprosarium near Canton, but that arrangement has come to an end. There is legislation allowing for the expulsion from the Colony

of lepers who cannot claim Hong Kong birth, or at any rate long residence there, but while tentative proposals are afoot for setting up a leprosarium in the Colony, the Tung Wah Hospital has in the meantime erected temporary matsheds to give shelter to the lepers.

Care of the destitute is an important part of the work of the Social Welfare Office. Its Relief Section provides free meals to some 1,700 down-and-out people every day at six welfare centres, emergency relief in the way of food, clothing and temporary shelter, as, for instance, after the Kowloon City fire when thousands were left homeless, free repatriation to South China, family case work, home visiting and admittance to relief camps.

The relief camp at North Point, which had over 300 people in it in March 1950, is quite international. The inmates are refugees who have been rendered homeless by the war, and there is a most capable, energetic American Negro in charge, Mrs. Thompson, who was born and brought up in Hong Kong. You find as you walk through the wooden hut-dormitories men, women and children of all races. Among them there were a number of Mexican-Chinese who would like to get back to Mexico, a strapping young Malay girl, waiting to get back to Malaya, and meanwhile enjoying football and boxing with the boys in the camp, and an Englishman who had been born in Riga and had served with the Shanghai police.

The camp provides food and lodging, a school, and a hut for orphan and destitute boys. This camp had a number of inmates from fairly well-to-do homes and it was very apparent that they were used to order and neatness, for each bed was spick and span, and all their personal belongings were tidily arranged on shelves. The camp pays a lot of attention to the occupations of the inmates and a co-operative spirit is encouraged. There was an air of brightness and hope about it.

The Morrison Hill camp has fewer inmates, about 218 in March 1950, but it is situated in a more restricted area and therefore seems more crowded. Also the people living there come from the lowest income group and they were less orderly in the arrangement of their few possessions. In this camp they live rent free but provide their own food, and in the large kitchen a cooking-place is reserved to every three families. It was crowded with men and women, and even children, cooking the evening

meal. The inmates had more of the air of being down-and-out than had those in the North Point camp.

A Street Sleepers Shelter Society was founded in 1933 with the aim of providing shelter during the winter months for those who were too poor to pay for accommodation. The main shelter is the one in St. Peter's Church at West Point, which we visited one night, and which is described later, but the Salvation Army also have a shelter for women at Wanchai, and there were 30 asleep on the bunks when we looked in there one evening.

The care of the destitute aged is largely in the hands of private charity. So, for that matter, are many social services in Hong Kong. A little booklet setting out the various Government and private welfare organizations, co-ordinated as far as possible through the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, shows that a great deal is done for the welfare of the needy by voluntary societies, many of them with a religious background.

There is a home for aged women run by the Chinese Christian Church Union, another for men and women managed by the Little Sisters of the Poor, and a third, at Sha Tin, which is a Buddhist Home and run by Chinese philanthropists. Here we saw some of the old women sitting by their beds quietly telling their beads. They looked serene and at peace.

For giving general assistance to those in need the Chung Sing Benevolent Society, founded in 1916, has done much good work, especially in helping victims of disasters, destitutes, and those in need of advances to build approved huts on approved sites. Then there is the Lok Sin Tong or 'Pleasure to do Good Deeds', a society set up 75 years ago in Kowloon for the welfare of the community. It helps to provide treatment for the sick, runs a free school, and organizes relief in cases of emergency. The Family Welfare Society investigates cases on the spot or by home visits, helping with loans, school fees, or in other appropriate ways. This Society also runs a free school and helps to maintain children in orphanages.

In March 1950 there was an unusual relief organization at work, that dealing with refugee Nationalist soldiers. Many of them were disabled and they had come in hundreds with their families to seek shelter at the Tung Wah Hospital. The Tung Wah Group is well known not only for its medical work but for its charities and organization of large-scale relief measures.

THE SICK AND THE DESTITUTE

More and more of these soldiers poured into Hong Kong and set up makeshift homes of tins and mats on the pavements around the Tung Wah Hospital in the centre of Hong Kong. By March there were close on 2,000 of them and you could scarcely make your way to the gate of the hospital through the close-packed shanties. The situation became impossible, and by the end of March Government had moved them all to buildings on Mount Davis Road, some way out of the city. The Tung Wah Hospital continued to feed them, with Government providing the lorries to deliver the cooked meals. Numbers continued to rise and in April, when we visited the soldiers, there were about 4,000 of them. The ruined buildings were bursting with them, and every path was lined with mat shelters for those who had not been able to get under a roof. You even found shops, for nothing seems to stand in the way of the Chinese setting up petty trading. Many of the wounded had been in Nationalist homes for disabled soldiers. When asked what they wanted to do, the reply was invariably, 'Get to Taiwan and join the Nationalist Army. The Communists have occupied our homes and if we go back we will starve'. The Tung Wah Hospital was endeavouring to get permits from Formosa for the entry of batches of 500 at a time.

From birth to death, it will be seen, Government has a care for the people, and even in death help is given when necessary. Care is limited by circumstances and is of necessity greatest in the case of the young and the aged and destitute. The matter-of-fact account I have given scarcely brings out either the extent of want and misery there is amongst the latter, or the great spirit of charity amongst those who work for them. Nor perhaps does the account indicate how much more is needed. But even if what is done is not adequate, the Hong Kong Government hides its light too much under a bushel in regard to its achievements. These deeds are not exploitation nor imperialism and the thoughtless who listen to our detractors should be made to realize it.

Christian Influences

AS THE PICTURE of Hong Kong has taken shape we have become aware, however inadequately, of the development of some of the Christian churches and of their influence. As has been seen in the case of some of these churches, their work is now largely in Chinese hands, and what has been said will suffice to show how firmly the early missionaries founded their work and how well native hands keep the torch alight. Considerations of space forbid a full account of the history and activities of missionary endeavour in Hong Kong during the last hundred years, but it would not be possible to assess the weight of Western influence in Hong Kong without at least some underlining of the contribution which Western missionaries are at present making.

Hong Kong is the see of two Bishops, Anglican and Roman Catholic, and of these the former was first established. It celebrated the centenary of the consecration of its first bishop in 1949. It was of course the first British settlers who brought the Anglican faith to Hong Kong, and a Colonial Chaplain was appointed to the Colony's official establishment in 1843. When the diocese of Victoria was set up, manned by the Church Missionary Society, it included the whole of China and Japan. North China was separated in 1872 and has since divided into a number of dioceses. In 1883 Japan was separated from Hong Kong and in the course of years a further three separate dioceses have been erected in South China. The Diocese of Victoria now includes the Colony, the province of Kwangtung and southern Kwangsi. The present bishop, Dr. R. O. Hall, is the seventh Bishop of Victoria.

The Roman Catholic faith came to Hong Kong in much the same way as the Anglican, namely with the first Portuguese settlers. A separate Prefecture for Hong Kong was carved off Macao in 1841 and in 1874 it was constituted a Vicariate apostolic with a bishop. It had been put under the care of the Foreign Missionary Institute of Milan in 1867. In 1946 the status was raised to that of a diocese, which, like the Anglican diocese, extends into China and includes about four million

people. In Hong Kong the church has about 40,000 adherents. Its bishops have of course been Italian and the present incumbent is Bishop H. P. Valtorta.*

The contribution which the missionaries in Hong Kong make through their schools, their hospitals and their pastoral work is indeed remarkable. Evidence of it in references to the work of Christian Chinese has been seen in this book, but if I were to single out two men as having special influence in Hong Kong as it is today they would be Bishop Hall and Father Ryan, the Superior of the Jesuits. Indeed, I do not think that any attempt to picture or assess the important influences at work in Hong Kong could be complete without reference to them.

In many ways markedly different characters, with a great confidence in each other and generally to be found in consultation on matters of social welfare, these two men exemplify in their work the practice and application of Christian charity to the problems of Hong Kong. Warm-hearted, impulsive, an ex-Tyneside vicar with a burning sense of the needs of the underprivileged, Bishop Hall has been in Hong Kong since 1932. During that time he has become recognized by the workers as their stoutest champion, and while he has also the reputation of being a stormy petrel, he has gained the widest respect for his sincerity and humanity. Not everybody agrees with all he does, but no one doubts that the causes he supports need attention and reform.

Father Ryan has been in Hong Kong about the same length of time as Bishop Hall and there are few aspects of Hong Kong life of which he is not an acknowledged expert. A man of wide educational attainments (he is by profession a schoolmaster) and culture, he has also a great humanity, and though he can no doubt suffer fools gladly he is an uncompromising critic of the second-rate, whether in music or art or drama or in Government administration. Everywhere sought as a counsellor, Father Ryan is widely known in all circles, and reaches a great many hearts and minds through his thoughtful, sane and witty broadcasts on a number of subjects. If one may say so without any disrespect, I think that the respective characters of Bishop Hall and Father Ryan can be briefly made clear by saying that they would be well named if their Christian names were Peter and Paul respectively.

* Bishop Valtorta died on 3rd September 1951.



PLATE XXXIII

‘Sharp cut along the waterfront is a sheet of deep blue glass on which ships look like tiny toys.
Beyond the harbour stand the nine peaks of Kowloon’ (p. 45)



The Dragon receives alms for the acrobats

PLATE XXXIV

The remarkable team of priests which Father Ryan heads has already been mentioned and reference made to some of the individuals who belong to it. These men are experts on widely different subjects as well as being priests, and in the belief that practical charity can best be demonstrated by their using all their talents for the good of Hong Kong, Father Ryan gives them their head in the fields in which they can make the greatest contribution. It is for this reason that one sees the unusual sight of Jesuit priests working in the wholesale vegetable market and in the agricultural department. One other particular case ought also to be mentioned as well exemplifying Father Ryan's policy and its beneficial effects. At Aberdeen he has 'let loose' Father Morahan to exercise his particular genius of getting people to work together, and in this way Hong Kong has been presented with what I can best describe as one of the finest unofficial D.C.s in any colony. There is an Italian parish priest at Aberdeen, but Father Morahan's field of action is not parochial. He is indeed a 'free lance' D.C. One was often meeting him out fighting some battle for the fisher-folk of Aberdeen. On one occasion he was in the city collecting the permits necessary for a dramatic performance to raise funds for the school. 'Did you ever see the like of it!' he exclaimed in his rich Irish brogue. 'To get a permit for an open-air show for a thousand people and a stage, I have got to (consulting a list in his hand) go to the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, the Commissioner of Police, the Fire Brigade, the Urban Council, the Building Authority, back to the Fire Brigade, the Accountant General, and then back to the Police again. Can ye see Chinese fishermen doing that?'

On another occasion he was fighting the battle for their cemetery. Government had ideas of removing the cemetery to the New Territories owing to the shortage of land. It was not an idea which was likely to appeal to the Chinese, whose family ancestors must be near them. It was an uphill struggle but Father Morahan finally arranged for the Chairman of the Urban Council to come and see the matter on the ground. 'I did not want the issue fogged,' he said, 'so I rang up the village and told them to shift all the unlicensed hawkers out of sight before he came!' He won his case.

An official D.C. might have had difficulties in doing some of the things that Father Morahan with a cheerful Irish contempt

for Government red-tape could do without a qualm—and much to the advantage of people and Government.

Of many interesting dinners in Hong Kong two especially stand out in my memory, one with the Jesuit Fathers at Ricci Hall and one with Father Morahan and his village council on Aplichau Island. The latter was held in a fishermen's restaurant, which was not exactly red plush and soft lights, but produced most marvellous fish dishes. Neither was there soft music, but against all the background of loudspeakers, blaring canned Chinese music at its loudest, we shouted happily at each other for three hours, and by the end of that time I had again a good deal of evidence in favour of the view that with the right guidance and leadership Chinese individualists are in no way incapable of combining in counsel and work for the good of a community.

Father Morahan and the villagers were mad keen about the school for which the village was trying to raise funds. One young member of the council, named Chan (we called on his mother, who had had 22 children), exclaimed, 'You get nothing from Government here, no schools, no water, no hospital'.

'Would you get them more easily in China?' I asked.

He grinned and admitted, 'Here Government sometimes pays, in China never'.

'We'll get the school', said Father Morahan. 'St. Theresa and a sixpenny-bit can do anything. A sixpence without the grace of God can do nothing.'

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Hong Kong's Government

THE GOVERNMENT of Hong Kong derives its constitutional authority from Letters Patent and Royal Instructions issued from time to time under the Royal Sign Manual. The former sets up the office of Governor and establishes Executive and Legislative Councils. The latter are general instructions to the Governor.

THE COUNCILS

In a colony the Governor is the Queen's representative and exercises the Royal Prerogative. Since the Queen is a constitutional monarch she acts on the advice of Ministers who are responsible to Parliament. In colonial matters the Secretary of State for the Colonies is the responsible Minister, and the Governor is therefore directed in the Royal Instructions to follow such directions as the Secretary of State may give him.

The Governor, in local matters, is advised by his Executive and Legislative Councils. The former is consulted by the Governor on all important matters and consists of both official and unofficial members. It is in the place of a cabinet, but it is not like the cabinet in English practice, for it is responsible to the Governor and not the local Parliament or Legislative Council. The latter does correspond to the House of Commons in that its procedure is based on that of its prototype; all laws are passed by and with its advice and consent, and it has to approve all expenditure from public funds. There, however, direct comparison ends. The members of the local legislature are not elected, but appointed. Nor are all the members of the Executive Council necessarily members of the legislature.

At the end of 1949 the Executive Council had five members by virtue of their office—the senior military officer, the colonial secretary, the attorney general, the secretary for Chinese affairs, and the financial secretary. The Letters Patent provide for such other members, official and unofficial, as may be appointed. There were actually six official members (the five *ex officio* members referred to and Mr. Hawkins, Commissioner of Labour and an expert in Chinese affairs) and six unofficial members. The latter were Sir Arthur Morse, the chief manager of the Bank, Mr. Landale, the head of Jardine's, Sir Man Kam Lo, a solicitor, two brothers, T. N. Chau, a barrister, and Dr. S. N. Chau, a physician, and a Portuguese barrister, Mr. Leo d'Almada.

The constitution of the Legislative Council provides for not more than nine official members, including the five *ex officio* members of the Executive Council, and not more than eight unofficial members. At the end of 1949 there were eight officials and seven unofficials. The other three officials were the Director of Medical Services, the Chairman of the Urban Council, and the Director of Public Works.

Of the unofficial members six are nominated by the Crown on the Governor's recommendation. Of these, three must be Chinese. One is nominated by the Justices of the Peace and one by the Chamber of Commerce. At the end of 1949 they included all the unofficial members of the Executive Council except Sir Arthur Morse. The others were Mr. Watson, a solicitor, and Mr. Cassidy, the head of John D. Hutchison, who was also chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and its representative.

The purpose of Executive and Legislative Councils is to advise and assist the Governor. Furthermore, since the germ of the Legislative Council lies in the House of Commons, its purpose is also to represent the people of the Colony. This, one would say, is its main function. As representatives of the people the members advise the Governor what laws should be passed and how public funds should be raised and spent.

It is clear from this account of these councils that the Governor has at his side not only those officials who are responsible between them for most activities of Government, but unofficials to represent the population and their interests. The former represent the general administration of the Colony, its financial affairs, the law, and Chinese affairs in general. Special emphasis is laid on health and sanitation, and public works. Education,* agriculture and its allied subjects, fisheries and forestry, are not specially represented.

On the unofficial side one may notice that racial groups are considered from the fact that there are three Chinese members and a Portuguese. The preponderance of unofficial British expatriates clearly shows that they are not primarily intended to represent the British community, which compared with the Chinese is infinitesimal. Unofficial members are chosen for their wide knowledge of a colony to represent its interests as a whole: it is obvious from the information so far given that the main interest represented is the main interest of Hong Kong—Trade. Indirectly at any rate law is also *prima facie* surprisingly strongly represented. There are no less than four unofficial members who are lawyers.

To see how far these councils represent the Colony fairly it is

* Since this was written the Director of Education has been appointed a member of the Legislative Council.

necessary to consider the make-up of the population. Making due allowance for the enormous temporary element in the population, it is evident that the Chinese are many more times the number of other communities. Of the small communities the true citizens of Hong Kong rightly have representation: the Indians have not.

In considering the representation of interests there is unfortunately insufficient data to show either how many are employed in different occupations or what the capital value of each activity is. We have seen how difficult it is to say how many people are employed in industry: it would be equally difficult to say how much is invested in it.

There are plainly a number of interests which are not represented at all. There are at least 200,000 people whose livelihood depends on agriculture and another similar number depending on the fisheries. Neither is represented officially or unofficially. The many thousands of workers in industries, in public utilities and so on have no unofficial representation. It is apparent that big business and finance is represented, but what of small?

An examination of the activities of the unofficial members of these Councils is a useful guide. They are to be found in Hong Kong's *Who's Who*—a section of the 'Dollar' Directory which now costs ten dollars.

Taking each activity after a member's name as one representation, the following analysis, which is not fully exhaustive, results:

Trade and Industry. Bank, 2; Jardine's and Jardine activities and major interests, 14; Shipping other than Jardine's, 3; Insurance other than Jardine's, 2; General business other than Jardine's, 6; Hotels, 1; Docks, 1; Lighterage, 1; Finance and Land other than Jardine's, 2. There is also some other representation of business, aviation and motor industry.

Public Utilities. Electricity, ferry, telephones, rediffusion, and tramways, 9.

Social Services. Hospitals, 2; Welfare organizations, 6.

Recreation. Football, 2; Jockey Club, 4; Automobile Association, 1.

As regards public activities, 7 members are Justices of the Peace, 2 are on the Committee of the War Memorial Fund, and 1 is a member of the Port Executive Committee, the Licensing

Board and the Price Control Advisory Board. As for education, Sir Arthur Morse is Treasurer of the University, and Mr. Cassidy on the managing committee of the Church of England Diocesan Boys School.

It should be noted that the direct representation of industry, other than utilities, is very slight, and curiously enough it also appears that commercial undertakings of a predominantly Chinese interest are very slightly represented. The Chinese members are to a large extent on the boards of undertakings which are predominantly British. The Portuguese representative is perhaps the only one whose main representation appears to be that of his community. He is also a member of the Kowloon Residents Association and may therefore be considered a member for Kowloon.

The principal conclusion to be drawn from this examination is that the interests of business, and mainly big British business, are the most extensively represented interests among those who are the Governor's unofficial advisers and the legislators of the Colony. It should also be noted that all public utilities except water supply and broadcasting (as opposed to rediffusion) are in the hands of private enterprise. They cover electricity, gas, tramways, bus services, ferries, and rediffusion. The telephones are also a private undertaking.

Finally it will be noted how well the historic pattern of Hong Kong is reflected in this analysis. Jardine's, the pioneers, are still prominent. The Bank, the principal feature of Hong Kong, is represented by its Chairman and Deputy Chairman. A glance at the records of the other directors of the Bank shows that they represent primarily Mackinnon Mackenzie & Co., David Sassoon & Co., Hong Kong Realty and Trust, I.C.I., the Union Insurance Society of Canton, and Butterfield & Swire. Secondly they represent many other famous interests and also help, like the councillors, to control most of Hong Kong's utilities. In addition they have many charitable and welfare interests, and, interestingly, many of them are connected with such societies as those of St. George and St. Andrew.

In fact a list of less than twenty names would suffice to include all those who have most influence in Government, finance and big business in Hong Kong. They have very much the appearance of a Board of Directors. This emphasizes that Hong

Kong is still to be regarded not as a true colony but as a trading port. How many of those who use any big department store think much about its management? I doubt very much whether the percentage of those who live in Hong Kong who care about its management would be very much higher. Hong Kong is run as a business concern and it is a very well-run department store—with welfare services and all.

Hong Kong's Urban Council is no more truly a manifestation of Local Government than its Legislative Council is an embryo Parliament. The title might lead one to suppose that city fathers administered it in much the same way as a Mayor and Corporation administer an English city, and indeed many a colonial city or town. Such, however, is far from being the case. The office of Chairman is held by the head of the Sanitary Department, and the Vice-Chairman is the Deputy Director of Health Services. It has three other official members, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, the Director of Public Works and the Commissioner of Police, and six nominated unofficial members. The Council is treated as a Government department with its expenditure provided as a head in the Colony's estimates. It has no revenue of its own and any rates or taxes it collects go into the Colony's chest. As a municipal body it is a farce: as an instrument of Government it is vital to the Colony and highly efficient. It is the guardian of public health and no health department anywhere has a more exacting task.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Law and Order

THE KEY TO the success of Hong Kong has always lain in the rule of law, and to the man in the street law is at once typified in Hong Kong by the Police and the Courts.

Nothing in Hong Kong is more evident than the police. Everywhere are to be seen in the cool season the familiar, traditional blue uniforms and peaked caps of British Police, with

their buttons, badges and numbers in silver, with their good-conduct badges of striped blue and white, and their black leather equipment. Perhaps the only less usual sight is the revolver holster. But under almost every peaked cap is a Chinese face. Sometimes, however, you see a bearded face and a blue turban belonging to one of the few surviving Sikh members of the force. Quite frequently you see an English face—with the silver rank badges of an officer on the shoulder-straps of the tunic. The strength of the force is over 3,000, and English, Sikhs and Chinese are not the only racial elements. Including Sikhs, there are over 300 Indians of various denominations—about a hundred are Punjabi Mussulmans. There are also Russians and Portuguese. But the great bulk are Chinese, some 300 from the North and well over 1,500 Cantonese, many not Hong Kong born.

Plainly a force like this cannot be easy to administer; plainly, too, there cannot be that loyalty to country which one finds not only in a police force at home, but in other colonial territories. Obviously, too, there must be 'incidents' and 'practices' which should not occur in British police forces, though no force can be entirely free from troubles of this kind. The remarkable thing is how little there is of these things and how little complaint there is of the police. It is probably true to say that people *expect* the police to indulge in 'squeeze', and that in fact there is very much less 'squeeze' than is expected. As for loyalty, there is a great deal of *esprit de corps* and a considerable degree of loyalty to the force. There is no doubt that Hong Kong's police force is a very big achievement. Probably no colonial police force is better equipped with the modern police aids of radio, police vans, police launches and so on, and the assistance these have been in the suppression of crime is dramatic.

The two main problems of the police, both in large degree insoluble, are the humdrum ones of traffic and hawkers. The former is the one which first impresses itself on any visitor. The really tough side of this is in Hong Kong City and is due mainly to the comparative narrowness of Queen's Road and the bottleneck caused by the Dockyard. Besides the 20,000 civilian vehicles there are several thousand service vehicles. There are well over 30,000 drivers. On the reoccupation in 1945 there were 150 cars!

Hawkers are a tremendous problem. In any country beset with a refugee problem the only obvious way to make a living, if you have not been fortunate enough to drop into a job, or have not enough capital to set up a shack and become a shop-keeper, is to buy something cheaply and sell it more expensively. Hong Kong has 9,300 licensed hawkers and some 35,000 unlicensed. Probably most of these have dependants and, multiplying by four, you can take it that some 170,000 people are dependent on hawking. There are several factors which make it difficult to cope with the problem satisfactorily. Firstly, people must live, and if they are not allowed to do it honestly they are bound to be dishonest; secondly, it brings the public into constant conflict with the police. Police cannot operate if they are regarded as public enemies. The strength of a police force depends on its being looked on as the impartial friend of the law-abiding public, and laws themselves depend on their being practicable to enforce and acceptable to the great mass of the public. The police have constantly to be careful how they exercise control, for control breeds disregard of the police, fights, and corruption in the police force itself.

We went one day to listen to a case in the Supreme Court. The case itself was of no outstanding interest, but I have rarely had a deeper feeling of the dignity and impressiveness of the method of the administration of British law. Part of this was due to accidental circumstances. I had come into the court from some particularly picturesque Chinese encounter which seemed as far and as foreign from a British law court as it could possibly be. I happened to know personally some of the parties and witnesses engaged in the case, which was particularly Chinese in its details, and it was a very hot, tropical, steamy day.

The court was air-conditioned. One stepped for a start from a tropical climate into a temperate one. It was a large and dignified panelled chamber and above the bench in all the glory of bright new paint were the Royal Arms and the motto *Dieu et mon droit*. The bewigged Chief Justice, the bewigged and gowned counsel, the steady, unhurried, and—to be sure—tedious unfolding of a case about the tenancy of some buildings used as a school, gave all the air of something quite apart from and above the noise and clamour of the market-place. It personified to me, as I felt it must have done to all the Chinese

schoolmistresses in their slit dresses who were present, the impartiality and the independence of British justice.

No less impressive was a peep into another court where the enthroned judge was faced only by a row of bewigged counsel. There was not a soul to listen to their learned arguments, and the scene suggested some esoteric religious rite, in which the priests of the Goddess of Justice necessarily robed themselves in their sacerdotal vestments to celebrate her rites in valid fashion.

Justice was no less emphatically, but much less ornately, administered in the Magistrates' Court, conveniently situated next door to the Central police station. There was a very busy crowded scene in all the courts and we watched in one court a British, and in another a Chinese, magistrate dealing with case after case in the most matter-of-fact sort of way. One young man was fined £3 for selling obscene photographs, a prison warder had attempted to steal a watch belonging to a prisoner, a man had set up a private postal service and was fined £6 or four weeks, a couple were each fined £3 10s. for cutting firewood from a prohibited area, and lastly a man who had obtained six rice bowls, valued at 3s. 9d., under false pretences had to pay £6 or go to prison for four weeks. A varied and not very exciting list of offences, but all of them lessons for those concerned that law and order must be respected.

PART FOUR

*THOUGHT AND
PURPOSE*

Hong Kong's Outlook

HOW PLENTIFUL, opulently thick and reminiscent of the past Hong Kong's newspapers seemed after those at home! And it recalled a bygone era to see the newsboys, generally women, carrying printed posters. One morning, soon after my arrival, I was confronted by one reading 'Labour Government may fall tonight'. One was left in no doubt that such an event was felt generally to be a consummation devoutly to be wished. The authentic Hong Kong recoils from anything Left as the Devil from holy water.

The Press of Hong Kong is important, extensive, influential, and has a long history behind it. It is true that some of the Chinese papers have changed their complexion with the Government of China. In particular the *Ta Kung Pao*, which had an independent Nationalist outlook, is now frankly Communist and makes a considerable appeal to the young intellectuals, but the *Wah Kiu Yat Po*, which is commercial rather than political, is very much of a Hong Kong colonial paper with an excellent local reputation amongst the true Chinese of Hong Kong. The British point of view remains unchallenged in the two leading English papers.

In keeping with their size, the outlook of these papers reflects a time which we in England will never see again. The *China Mail* was established in 1845 and is the oldest paper in the Far East. It is a favourite 'family' paper of the old kind. The *South China Morning Post* first appeared in 1903 and is a responsible journal of wide repute which criticizes Government with vision and fairness. Its editor, Mr. H. Ching, an Australian Chinese, started, he said, as a Socialist, has been through all the cycles, and with age has mellowed into a 'good old Conservative'. When the leading units disembarked from the relieving fleet on the liberation of Hong Kong they were surprised to find a British newspaper already being distributed. It was a single-sheet extra of the *South China Morning Post*, announcing the arrival of the Forces.

HONG KONG'S OUTLOOK

It is not only in the material things of life—the many surviving *large* rooms, the *fat* newspaper with porridge, *two* eggs and bacon and *very* fragrant coffee for breakfast—and all the rest—that Hong Kong offers, to those who can afford it, an escape to times past, but in much of its atmosphere. Hong Kong in its spirit still breathes Kipling. It was this spirit which led ex-internees of Stanley to get Government going when the Japanese surrendered, and, reinforced by military government, to clean up the Augean stable which the Japanese had left.

On Christmas Day 1941 the lights of Hong Kong had gone out. The eclipse was total and lasted for three years and eight months. All fighting men became prisoners of war in a camp at Sham Shui Po, and all non-Asian civilians were interned at Stanley. All, that is, save for a very few left at large because the Japanese had need of their services. Among them were Dr. Selwyn Clarke, the Director of Medical Services, and Sir Vandeleur Grayburn of The Bank. For nearly two years Dr. Selwyn Clarke battled to keep some sort of health services going. At the same time he helped those who were interned. Finally the Japanese arrested and tortured him and sentenced him to four years' imprisonment. Sir Vandeleur, who was arrested earlier, died in prison, and during what are known as the 'bloody trials of 1943' about 40 Hong Kong residents lost their lives. Among those who were tortured were two leading members of the Indian community, Mr. Ruttonjee and his son. The Japanese had tried to get the former to become president of an Indian Independence League, but he refused steadfastly to collaborate.

The Chinese population was ruthlessly reduced. It was estimated that some 10,000 were executed, and great numbers left the Colony. But the loyalty to the Allied cause of those who remained in Hong Kong was never in doubt. There were Chinese guerillas in the New Territories all through the war, and anyone trying to escape from the Japanese was sure of help from the peasants in the New Territories. The British Allied Aid Group, organized by Colonel Ryde, now Vice-Chancellor of the University, consisted of Chinese, Eurasians, Portuguese and British, many of whom had escaped from Hong Kong. This organization helped others to get out, set up hospitals and relief feeding centres, and was responsible for intelligence.

When at last, on the 30th August 1945, the British Pacific Fleet sailed into the harbour, 80 per cent of the population were described as showing signs of malnutrition. The Japanese had withdrawn their guards from prison camps some days before, and former members of the Government who had been interned, headed by Mr. (now Sir) Franklin Gimson, the Colonial Secretary, had restarted the rusty machinery of British administration, which on 1st September was succeeded by military administration under Admiral Sir Cecil Harcourt.

The situation which confronted the administration was challenging. Hong Kong's economic life was dead. The population had melted away, public utilities were scarcely working: food, shipping, industry and trade were non-existent. There was ruin everywhere: wharves and docks were extensively damaged and 20,000 homes had been destroyed. The place swarmed with rats, malaria was rife, for the Colony's anti-malarial work had been cynically neglected, and lawlessness was widespread.

While the British so often neglect the role of Mary, they are the Marthas of the world, and they set about things with mops and buckets in no uncertain way. They destroyed the plagues of rats and cockroaches, cleared up the rubble, and repaired and rebuilt. They tidied up the harbour, they provided food and kept it at reasonable prices, they honoured the Bank's notes issued under duress, and they blew up the gigantic war memorial the Japanese had built. 'At no time', it was reported, 'did the public mind waver from its initial confidence in a golden future for the Colony and its people.'

The Kipling spirit had *not* suffered an eclipse. It was the same spirit which led the ex-internees to do their best to make *their* side of Hong Kong seem as if nothing had happened. Not only have most visible signs of Japanese occupation gone, but golf, race meetings, bathing picnics and the like were quickly got going again, as far as possible in the old British way. There was quite a feeling about bathing-places on the Castle Peak Road becoming free for all. The cricket ground, about the only open space in central Hong Kong, was kept British and an attempt to give it to the Defence Force, in which all communities are represented, successfully resisted—thanks largely to the Navy, who held the well-understood view that Hong Kong was a British colony and cricket was a British game. *C'est magnifique*—

but if there were any risk that the cricket ground should be built on, they did well.

It should be said that race meetings, bathing picnics and the like have appealed in a big way to the Chinese. The Chinese membership of the Jockey Club is enormous and there is one Chinese steward. But there are still far too many British apt to consider Chinese as likeable Orientals who cannot run things and are often corrupt.

The picture painted is, admittedly, pre-eminently that atmosphere in which much of the foreign element thinks and lives, but it is also one in which the Chinese have acquiesced and indeed largely found suitable to their own aspirations. Hong Kong's old specific, law and order, brushed up with an almost completely new police force, has paid handsome dividends since the war. People, money, goods have poured in. Much of Shanghai has transferred itself bodily there—a very untraditional thing to happen. The city has undergone considerable extension and considerable modernization in a very brief space of time. There is no shortage of anything, not even American dollars. The good management of the Administration, with its aims of avoiding any embroilment in the affairs of China and of striving to adjust whatever policy comes out of Whitehall to its own business needs, has quite accidentally suited Chinese realism and individualism down to the ground. The Chinese in Hong Kong have certainly been in a position to reach the conclusion that good management without politics in Hong Kong is more profitable than politics and confusion in China, and to see that honest management with impartial law brings bigger returns than corruption, venality and nepotism. Some certainly have reasoned this way, but for my part I doubt if there are many. Most have taken it all for granted.

The enormous migrant population has no interest in Hong Kong's ultimate welfare at all. These people come and go as it pays them. Even the migrant, however, dislikes regimentation, and the more regimentation there is in China the more the Chinese in Hong Kong appreciates his surroundings, and, with the small exception of political fanatics, Hong Kong's two million inhabitants proceed brisk and busy on their affairs in freedom and confidence. No one who has spent a short time there can have any doubt that the vast majority of the Chinese



‘Chinese make-up looks peculiar to Western eyes and the elaborate coiffure of the actresses needs most intricate and lengthy preparation’ (p. 119)



Two pictures in the traditional style by Wong May, a thirteen-year-old girl in the Ko Nin school

in Hong Kong instinctively prefer it as it is. To put it at its lowest—they would not come there if they did not.

Law and order, the stability of the currency, and the enforcement of contracts are benefits not to be had everywhere in the Far East these days, and the Chinese value them, even if he does so subconsciously, to enable him to work and enjoy the fruits of his labour, knowing that he will encounter as little interference as possible. Those who have grown up there have no interest in politics. The thinkers have in recent years watched the war lords at their antics: they have seen the civil war and they have seen Chinese currency melt away. They have watched with disgust the corruption of the Kuomintang. They have seen that the disappearance of merchant control in Shanghai has led to a stagnation of trade, and they have seen the near-ruin of Canton. On the other hand, racial ties are strong. The Chinese of Hong Kong have relations, and many still have homes, in China. They know that to prosper in Hong Kong there must be trade with China. More than this, the Chinese are a proud people. In Hong Kong or out of it they are conscious both of their age-old culture and of their days of weakness, and it would need an unusual degree of moral courage to stand up openly for the *status quo* in Hong Kong when the alternative presents all the marks of the fulfilment of national aspirations.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Citizens of Hong Kong

ONE SOON PERCEIVES that few Chinese regard Hong Kong as their home or native land. There are certainly some who regard themselves as citizens of Hong Kong and British subjects, but I doubt if I met any of whom I could say with perfect confidence that they did so to the exclusion of any connection, other than race, with China. Furthermore, although the Hong Kong born Chinese are by British law British subjects, they are also by Chinese law Chinese citizens. They appreciate Britain

with their intellects, but love China with their hearts, and regard Hong Kong as part of China. It is doubtful if there are more than 5,000 who would claim British nationality unequivocally. |

Flags in Hong Kong plainly mean different things to different people and cannot be interpreted uniformly. The Union Jack on Government House was of course as British as that on Government House, Jamaica, or as any flying in London. Just as British were those which flew on the houses of the Taipans on Sundays: this is, so I was told, an old Hong Kong custom. On the other hand, those flying over police stations seemed to me rather less British than those on a West African police station, simply because most Chinese policemen were merely the paid servants of the British Crown. Then again the enamelled Union Jacks on the frontier, though they gave *me* all the reactions I should expect, meant no more to the Chinese than a sign on a private estate.

It has been usual to display both the Union Jack and the Chinese Nationalist flag at gatherings of a mixed nature. When the Nationalists disappeared so did their flag, and there was a good deal of doubt as to what to do with a flag which was frankly Communist. In at least one case the problem was solved by sending all the flags to the cleaners. Yet the Communist flags which I saw being so busily sewn in shops were not necessarily ordered by Communist sympathizers. In many cases people wanted to display them to be on the safe side, and in others they were flown as the national flag of China.

The outlook of Hong Kong's inhabitants to the question of their citizenship is also shown, partly at least, in the composition of the Hong Kong Defence Force. Volunteering in Hong Kong is no new thing: the first record of it is in 1854 when the inhabitants were invited to form a 'corps of volunteers for the defence of the lives and properties of themselves and their families'. In the officers' mess we met an old and enthusiastic volunteer, Major Evan Stewart, who showed us photographs of volunteers in 1860 and in 1930. In 1860 they were known as the 'Devil's Own'. A tradition has grown up and the volunteers have a proud record of service both during the hostilities of the recent war and the Japanese occupation.

We watched a squad being 'put through the hoop' in no

DEFENCE FORCE

uncertain fashion by a Royal Marine Commando N.C.O. 'You are allowed to open your eyes', he barked at one aspirant for the bull's-eye, a remark I remember so well being hurled at me at least 35 years ago. A huddle of women drivers were poring over the mysteries of a log-book on the grass. One of them was Chinese. In a classroom on the parade ground a short, stocky figure in battledress, much decorated with ribbons, was giving an excellent lecture on defensive positions—Sergeant Quah, a Chinese ex-Commando Sergeant and in ordinary life one of Hong Kong's schoolmasters. In the sergeants' mess we had a drink with a Cockney who had been 27 years in the Sanitary Department, but still hoped one day to get back to London streets.

In September 1949 the racial make-up of the Force was:

British, including 43 Chinese British subjects	570
Chinese	42
Danish	4
Portuguese	28
Russian	4
Stateless	14
Miscellaneous (including Irish, German, Dutch and Filipino)	22
Total	684

In February 1950 the total strength was 822, including about 30 women.

It will be seen that there is a large preponderance of British, but the present constitution provides for complete equality of treatment of all members and the complete mixing up of all racial elements. There is now a feeling that the Force is really getting somewhere.

At the end of 1949 the number of non-Chinese in Hong Kong, excluding members of the armed forces and their families, had increased to about 14,600, which figure includes some 9,500 British subjects and Commonwealth citizens, and about 3,000 British subjects of Portuguese race. There were also about 2,500 Indians whose original homes are now in either India or Pakistan. How many of them consider themselves as belonging to the Republic of India or the Dominion of Pakistan I do

not know, but some belong to families long settled in Hong Kong and they have told me they regard themselves as 'Colonials'. They are very loyal British subjects, though their real loyalties, I fancy, may be more strongly to the abstract Britain rather than to Hong Kong. They cling to the idea of the imperial British raj with its lofty concept of impartial justice and the provision of opportunity for those who could take advantage of it, with its spirit of free enterprise and great charity, in the shelter of whose rule men with the ability to rise could rise and become rich and powerful. They scarcely realize that times have changed.

The Parsees with their trading interests were about the first Indians to settle in Hong Kong, and though they have not expanded much as a community they have for long been important. Today there are only about 80 or 90 Parsees, but there are some 3,000 Muslims, most of whom are Indian.

Round about the mosque in Sherry Street a community of Indians has grown up. Sitting in the compound in the shade of the mosque one Sunday morning, I felt that companionship which so quickly springs up amongst Muslims and those who share a sympathy and the classic language of Islam with them. Fortified with the strong sweet tea with milk which is so popular with Indian Muslims, eight of us—Indian, Chinese and English—talked in three dialects of Chinese, Urdu, Arabic and English. The strange thing was that for all the difficulty of conversation it went well simply because of the community of sympathy and interest. The bond of interest in Islam can be a very strong one, but we might have been anywhere in the world. There was no feeling that our mutual sympathy was in any way engaged by Hong Kong. The natural sympathy of Muslims for each other does not often in Hong Kong bind Indians and Chinese together, though naturally there was sympathy for the Muslims in Canton who, so one of the party said, had been ordered to stop teaching religion, to pay taxes on their mosque and *waqf*, and had machine-guns mounted on the minaret. Also there was sympathy for another of the party, a Muslim Chinese general who had had to fly from the Communists.

Probably with few exceptions the Indian Muslims would wish the Colony to be British rather than Chinese, while the Chinese Muslims have certainly a greater appreciation of Britain's

attitude to religion than they have of that of the Chinese Communists.

We cannot, however, look in these communities for 100 per cent citizens of Hong Kong, nor shall we find them among the British expatriates. There are some British families long settled in Hong Kong, but Britain is still home to them. As one of them said to me, 'We should certainly fight to keep Hong Kong because we feel it belongs to us. It is a British possession'. But they do not feel that they belong to it. Clear and sure from the Portuguese and from the Eurasians comes the claim, 'We are the true citizens of Hong Kong'.

A leading member of the Portuguese community said to me, 'Our love of things British is only exceeded by our veneration for things Portuguese'. It is not so much the Portugal of today which draws their affection as the historic Portugal in which their own roots are embedded. 'Portugal is like a pleasant dream of an age that's past', my friend went on. 'Our only link with it is Macao.'

So far we have seen Macao as the little Portuguese settlement in which British merchants of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were permitted to live and to be buried, but to find the roots of the Portuguese of Hong Kong we may often have to go back a century or two to Portugal's own heroic age, a period of which Camoens could write, 'If there had been more of the world they would have reached it'. Of the toughness of those who sailed under Vasco da Gama and his successors there is no need to dilate; those are the people who settled and held Macao on tenuous terms.

In 1823 the Portuguese frigate *Salamander* arrived at Macao and on board was Dom Joaquim d'Eca Telles d'Almada e Castro, a Lieutenant in the Batalhao Principe Regente. He served 20 years in Macao and died at Malacca on his way back to Portugal on his retirement. He had two sons, Leonardo and José Maria, who went to Hong Kong when the staff of the Superintendent of Trade was transferred from Macao to the new Colony in 1842. Leonardo became clerk of the Executive and Legislative Councils and some years later the Secretary of State directed the Governor to appoint him Colonial Secretary. The appointment was apparently not carried out on the grounds that he was not a British subject, but plainly he was considered

suitable for the post of head of the civil service in the Colony. He died in 1875. His brother, José Maria, became private secretary to Sir John Pope Hennessy, and was chief clerk in the Secretariat and clerk of council when he died in 1881. His eldest son entered Government service; the second became chief clerk in the Hong Kong office of the International Banking Corporation, and two other sons, Francisco Xavier and Leonardo, became successful solicitors. The daughters married and their children include a solicitor, Government officials and merchants. The law has in fact claimed most of the family. One son of Leonardo the solicitor is Mr. Leo d'Almada e Castro, K.C., a member of the Executive Council since 1949 and of the Legislative Council since 1937. The other is Mr. C. P. d'Almada e Castro, who became Assistant Crown Solicitor in 1941 and is now Registrar of the Supreme Court. Several members of the family took a leading part during the British Military Administration after the reoccupation.

This record of one Portuguese family is by no means unique, and many Portuguese are to be found in responsible positions in Hong Kong, as doctors, lawyers, merchants, clerks, and so on. With the first coming of the Portuguese to the Colony there came, of course, Roman Catholicism, and the history of the growth of Catholicism in Hong Kong is bound up largely in the history of the Portuguese community. As the community grew the need for a social centre was felt and the Club Lusitano had its first premises in 1865. There is an air of Victorian grace, culture and prosperity about the coloured pictures of the theatre and ballroom of the old club in Sherry Street which hang in the new building in Icehouse Street. The Club has 450 members and during the Japanese occupation it was a haven of refuge for the community generally, and no fewer than 383 persons sheltered in it at one time. For its services the Government of Portugal conferred on it the Military Order of Christ. Its President, Dom Basto, was decapitated by the Japanese as an alleged leader of a spy ring. During the war the Portuguese were to be found in large numbers in the Volunteers, the Police Reserve, A.R.P., A.N.S., and other organizations, and a number of them gave their lives in the defence of the Colony. The community numbers in all about 3,000, of whom 80 per cent are British subjects. It is important that we should not be

unaware of or neglectful of a community to which the Empire owes so much. Yet by the very fact of their loyalty and the identification of their interests with ours, they are easily overlooked in the problem of the Chinese millions.

It is less easy to describe the Eurasians as a community. They are people of two worlds living to some extent in both. I learnt their outlook and appreciated their worth by knowing them as friends, and of those I met few equalled Cecilia Woo. No one could fail to have been impressed with her competence, the deep earnestness of her interest in her job, and the tremendous sympathy she had for humanity in general and its less fortunate victims in particular. Sturdier than a Chinese girl, but less hearty and artificial than many an English girl of her type, she seemed to have inherited much of the best of both worlds. Her life has been a mixture of customs, her education both Chinese and English. She knows the two worlds intimately and values both. Hong Kong, she said, is home to her and to all like her.

As a schoolgirl she read Dickens. 'It was because of that and other books', she told me, 'I had a great desire to visit the London slums, hoping that some day I could do social work in Hong Kong.' One night when Cecilia took us on a tour of street sleepers' shelters, she brought us to the abandoned church of St. Peter in West Point. It was about 11 o'clock, peaceful, silent and cold, and a solitary light lost itself before it reached the dark recesses of the roof. We tiptoed round, for all over the floor and on bunks, men, women and children lay in the deep sleep of exhaustion. There were 105 in that night. One woman lay pallid and fast asleep all unconscious of her child still suckling. Another lay with two small infants curled beside her. One alone seemed to be wide awake, a smiling old woman, busily, deftly, knitting a fishing net.

'This is where I used to come years ago,' whispered Cecilia, 'cleaning their sores.'

Eurasians were not interned by the Japanese when Hong Kong fell. Cecilia felt she must help and offered her services to a gallant doctor. Besides helping him in the French hospital she used to carry messages for him to the families of internees and prisoners of war. She knew that the Japanese were watching him and felt quite fatalistically that she herself was likely to get caught at some time.

On 11th February 1943 she was killing time after lunch in Queen's Road before delivering one of the doctor's messages. She heard someone shout 'There she is!' but took little notice until a man grabbed her and took her to the Central police station. Almost at once she was seen by Corporal Yishi, well known for his brutality. His object was to find evidence against the doctor, and when Cecilia failed to reply to his rough questioning he hit her across the face. Then he told her to take off her dress, her arms were tied behind her, and she was pulled off the floor by a rope hung from the ceiling. Taking a truncheon ('They used whatever was handy', she said), he alternately beat her and questioned her for two hours.

At five o'clock he let her sit down for a while and then began again. He beat her all over until the sweat poured off him. Later an officer came in and tried more gentle questioning, and finally, about 10 o'clock, she was taken to a cell. For a fortnight she was in solitary confinement and never got a wash or a change of clothes, though her family had sent things in for her. Her food consisted of about eight ounces of rice a day thrown into her cell in a newspaper. After a fortnight she was allowed to exercise, and in this way a month passed. Then one day the cell door was opened, a basket of clothes pushed in, and she was ordered to get ready to leave. It took her an hour to comb out her hair.

With a spirit tempered by the fire of suffering there could hardly have been a question of what Cecilia was going to do after the war. September 1945 presented Government with a situation in which, owing to the re-establishment of the Hong Kong dollar and the consequent worthlessness of the *yen*, 90 per cent of the population had no money and little immediate prospect of getting any. Thirty thousand people had to be provided with food each day. Clothes and money relief had to be distributed. There were 9,000 homeless children to be cared for. Such a state of affairs was at once a challenge to Cecilia and a clear call to a job.

I asked her what her ambition in life was. 'To work for the better understanding of races', she replied. She is proud of inheriting two great civilizations, and feels that Eurasians ought to be well qualified to act as links between the two. She told us some of the difficulties of Eurasians, and of where racial

discrimination still exists. She has a friend who on a journey back from England made friends with a young Englishman coming out to join a firm. He was full of enthusiasm for the country he was coming to and determined to know the Chinese. She undertook to help him and they arranged to meet when they reached Hong Kong. A week after their arrival the girl had a letter from him saying that he had been ordered not to continue their acquaintance because it was against the policy of the firm that its employees should have local friends. ✓

Cecilia had no bitterness about these things, and was therefore extremely convincing when she spoke of them. She talked of the difficulties Eurasians had in getting senior posts, of differences in salaries, housing, and so on. After two years in England she feels people there do not feel enough about the importance of race relations.

We went one night to dine with her family. They have English breakfast and English tea, Chinese lunch and Chinese dinner. Cecilia's father, tall, going bald, a retired business man, was, he said, 'an incurable optimist and a firm believer in the permanency of Hong Kong as a British colony'. To him no other prospect would be tolerable, but the question of Hong Kong's future is much debated in Eurasian homes, for it is vital to them.

When I think of the Eurasians in Hong Kong, I think also of Mark Wong and his wife Helena. Their story and those of others could fill a book, but it would need a skilled novelist to tell the stories for they would hardly be credible as fact. Born in Hong Kong in 1910 and educated in St. Joseph's College, Mark went into business and during the war he became involved, almost accidentally, in the passing of letters from internees at Stanley to Macao. This gradually developed into full-time intelligence work. Given away by a colleague under torture, he himself was arrested in the middle of the night and taken to police headquarters. He was given no food; he was interrogated at nine the next morning and then was tortured. He had water poured into him, he was hung up by his thumbs, he was burnt with cigarettes. They tied him to a chair, put a silk handkerchief over his face and dropped water into his nose. They flogged him. He never gave anyone away and only escaped with his life because of a Japanese interpreter who had known him and vouched for

him. He then got to Macao and so into Free China, where he joined the British Army and became a captain.

Mark is a delightful companion, but I did not feel he was altogether happy or 'adjusted'. There is something highly strung or emotionally unstable about some Eurasians that is probably inevitable with dual characteristics, and the fact of their being between two worlds. Perhaps it was telling me his story and getting back to the time when he was doing more than a man's job which made him lean across the table and say: 'Don't forget us when you write about Hong Kong. I mean us Eurasians. Hong Kong is our home, it is our only country for we are not accepted anywhere else. We belong to it. We don't belong wholly either to China or to Europe. There is such a lot of uncertainty about the future that we feel no security. We can fight for it, but what can we do, we are so few. We feel afraid that if it becomes too difficult to hold Hong Kong, we may be deserted.'

We must indeed remember our Portuguese and Eurasian fellow subjects, and the Chinese and Indians who have stood on our side. We and these people belong together. To the Chinese anyone who is not entirely Chinese is a foreigner. No one should have to live in their own homeland as foreigners.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Political Development in Hong Kong

EVER SINCE Lord Durham recommended responsible self-government for Canada in 1839 British colonial policy has been based on the fundamental aim of teaching the colonial peoples to govern themselves. In 1948 the goal was restated as 'responsible self-government within the Commonwealth in conditions that ensure to the peoples concerned both a fair standard of living and freedom from oppression from any quarter'.

Many people believe that Hong Kong could not survive if it attempted to follow this path towards self-government. It is

not very easy to prove conclusively that to develop internal democratic government as a substitute for capitalist good management would result in the ruin of Hong Kong, but the fact remains that out of a population of over 2,000,000 the vast majority of the people are neither devoted citizens of Hong Kong nor greatly attached to the Commonwealth. The highest figure I have seen given of the maximum number of people who might be genuine citizens is 200,000, but I believe that that may be much more than double the true number. It does indeed seem difficult for the inhabitants of a country to achieve responsible self-government if most of them have no sense of belonging to it, nor a sense of loyalty to it as their homeland.

Nevertheless, Britain's promise to guide the peoples of the colonies to self-government applies to Hong Kong just as much as to the Gold Coast and Jamaica, the two colonies which flank it in the alphabet of the Empire. It applies to Gibraltar, to the Falklands, to St. Helena, to the Gambia, just as much as it applies to Nigeria or to Malaya. This recital must emphasize the point that not all these territories can become self-governing members of the Commonwealth like Ceylon. The term 'self-government within the Commonwealth' must therefore embrace all solutions which can give to the inhabitants of all dependent territories as much say in determining their own affairs as have the inhabitants of these islands. The extent of the say is always determined by circumstances which are not necessarily constant.

The case of the colonies and self-government is the case of the horse and the water, but if the inhabitants of Hong Kong did want self-government what could be their goal? It has a population greater than New Zealand and its trade figures are enormous, but it has few natural resources and its area is less than 400 square miles. There is no member of the Commonwealth or other independent country as small as this and so lacking in developable resources. Could it be a Malta, self-governing in internal affairs but with its foreign affairs and defence in the hands of Britain? Size, population and resources might not preclude this, but it is the feeling of the people which is really the deciding factor. The Maltese are strongly nationalist, devoted to Malta and greatly attached to Great Britain. The case of Shanghai suggests that loyalty to country may not

be a necessary constituent of a form of municipal government. It is true that the Chinese were not included in the franchise of the International Settlement, but the city was administered by its foreign residents with a municipal constitution far more democratic than the bureaucracy of Hong Kong.

It is tempting to inquire whether Hong Kong could not be made into a sort of Chinese Hamburg. Superficially it has several points of resemblance, but although the free city of Hamburg was governed by a considerable degree of democracy based on trade, its people were all Germans, and the people around it were all Germans. In Hong Kong it would still be necessary to have the British outlook and connection in the free city, and this might not be easy to maintain with some quite different ideological outlook in China.

After the war His Majesty's Government announced its intention of giving the inhabitants a fuller share in the management of their own affairs, and the Governor was deputed to make recommendations. After consulting representatives of all sections of the community he recommended the setting up of a Municipality and certain modifications in the Legislative Council which would give a more representative character to the unofficial element. In submitting these recommendations the Governor commented on the indifference shown by the public to the proposals. Such interest as there was directed itself to a moderate broadening of the basis of popular representation in the Legislative Council.

When it comes to the practicability of the Colony developing into, *e.g.*, a self-governing city state, the difficulties certainly seem at present formidable. Unlike most colonies, Hong Kong has not so far made any very positive steps to discover whether its inhabitants can be taught to work democracy, but it certainly has to be proved, first, that you have not necessarily to feel an exclusive citizen of Hong Kong to be a good citizen of it; secondly, that you are prepared to stand up for democracy against some other system which your brother across the border may feel obliged to support; and thirdly, that Chinese ways of thought and life can surrender such of their characteristics as may conflict with the successful practice of the Western way of life.

Political thought in Hong Kong has scarcely progressed beyond the turn of the century and one is forced reluctantly to

the conclusion that at present it could not, safely, do more constitutionally than emulate the political system of England in the nineteenth century, but people must be educated to a sense of personal responsibility for their own affairs. There is much which could be done in developing some form of local government in the villages and in the quarters of the city. The world is only safe for democracy when the common man appreciates his responsibility for the common welfare.

The proposals for constitutional reform are still 'alive', but during my stay in Hong Kong I could not discern any enthusiasm for them. The situation was very different in the case of coming constitutional changes in the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and tiny Gibraltar.

Curiously, and in strong contrast to trends in other colonies, the blame for so little progress having been made with them has been laid at the door of the Colonial Office by Mr. Landale of Jardine's. In a speech in the Legislative Council in 1949 he said he had been a member of a caretaker council waiting for a new constitution to be set up. He continued:

May I, for a brief moment, soliloquize over those last three years and take as a simile the Mad Tea Party out of *Alice in Wonderland*. I will not be so bold as to cast all the characters in this amusing sketch of Lewis Carroll's, but the Dormouse seems to depict admirably the Colonial Office. The Dormouse, as most of us know, slept all through the Tea Party and was only woken up on rare occasions by the Hatter pouring tea on its nose, and it was during one of these uneasy moments of wakefulness that it told the story of Elsie, Lacey and Tilly who lived in a well. These three can take the part in my soliloquy of the people of Hong Kong. The Dormouse never finished its story, it just went to sleep again, leaving Elsie, Lacey and Tilly in the well. That, Sir, is rather how we are today, patiently waiting for some more tea to be poured on the Dormouse's nose so that we can find out what is to happen to us.

The delay is not because the Dormouse is asleep, but because Elsie, Lacey and Tilly are taking no interest in the proceedings.

The Impact of Western Thought

THE DIFFICULTY which the bulk of Hong Kong's population so plainly feels in declaring itself unreservedly out to defend a colony which it equally plainly greatly appreciates, is rightly attributed to Chinese realism, to racism and other easily understandable causes. Nevertheless, it is less immediately apparent why these indigenous characteristics should not have undergone more modification as a result of British contact. After all, men of many other races and cults have fought to support and preserve what it has brought to them.

It is surely education in the broad sense which has led them to appreciate its benefits, and this makes it worth while to inquire why the bringing of British ideas of education to Hong Kong has not had the same results there.

Education was one of those problems which mankind in China and mankind in the West had to discover and solve in isolation from each other. China discovered it and thought she had solved it long before the West. The Emperor Wu Ti of the Han dynasty (140-87 B.C.) organized the system of public civil service examinations, though its elements existed from an earlier date. The system lasted till 1905 and the idea of education which grew up as a consequence of it survived until 1895. Any system which lasts two millenniums must have merits, but by the time it has lasted that long it has become at least an ingrained habit of thought, and the impact upon it of Western ideas must have important results.

One night in a West Point club (which we have already noticed as part of China's solution in isolation of another problem) a man with a lean, cultured face and a humorous smile sat down at the table opposite me. I do not remember how it was that the conversation turned to education, but it was natural that it should for my *vis-à-vis* was a former Inspector of Schools, Y. P. Law. He told me about his own education and I was soon so engrossed in the story that I barely noticed when the little singer, to whom we had been listening, stopped strumming after her song and slipped away.

Law had started with the old-time education and no thought of any other coming his way. 'We had to go to school almost as soon as we got out of bed at dawn, and spent the whole day in school until almost bedtime, even taking our meals with the teacher. The only holidays we had were the Chinese New Year—two to three weeks—plus two days for the two most important festivals of the year, the Dragon Boat festival and the mid-Autumn festival. It was a godsend if the teacher or oneself fell sick—a chance for an extra holiday. We learnt everything by rote, and were expected to be able to recite, as well as to write out correctly, the whole of the "Four Books". This was important because in the public examinations, if a mistake were made in writing out anything from the Four Books, one was failed at once.'

'By the time I was ten,' he went on, 'I had learnt ten books by heart. It never occurred to me to question the propriety of doing so and it never would have done.'

At the age of 10 a child such as Law had every character of those Books, and every phrase, engraved on his memory. The inevitable result was that the power of *independent* thought was fettered: it was confined within a walled garden, in which the contents of those works were cultivated. Subsequent education consisted in comment on them, the composition of essays on their texts, and the writing of verse illuminated only by Confucian thought. There was, there could be, nothing new.

Law, however, had an unusual father who saw that to compete with the powerful West, so radically affecting an agelong civilization, it was necessary to have Western learning also. On Chinese analogy he no doubt thought that it would be a matter of absorbing a number of Western classics and writing essays and verses in another garden. This would be easy to a boy with a Chinese-trained memory. This was also Y.P.'s way of looking at it. After 10 years of the Chinese education, Law was sent to Hong Kong in 1903, crammed in English and in due course sent off to Cambridge. There, he told me, he suddenly realized that he was being taught to think for himself.

When someone who has been brought up in the what-to-think school discovers he is in the how-to-think one, all sorts of things may happen. Law's story brought home to me how great the shock of the awakening must be. There are dangers and

difficulties ahead which the how-to-think educators have to provide for if their methods are to succeed. What had happened to Law was an epitome of what happened to a whole nation.

It is interesting to note how far back the all-in, what-to-think school of Wu Ti in China antedates modern inventors of what-to-think systems. There must have been a good deal in the Chinese system which was admirable when compared with Western what-to-think systems, whether of the Right or the Left. Confucius was a better man than Hitler or Marx, and his teachings were reasonably accepted as the final canon of life for a right-minded man.

There were really only two possible careers open to an educated youth in China, the Civil Service or commerce. It is curious that neither of these are to be found in our own cherry-stone game 'Tinker, Tailor . . . ' or its more sophisticated alternative, 'Army, Navy, Divinity, Law, Physics'. None of these would have been found in the ordinary Chinese child's choice.

The thing was the Civil Service. It was open to all, even the humblest, save the descendants of prostitutes, actors, executioners and jailers. These young men, all thinking alike, competed in the State examinations, and those who showed that their memories were the best-trained, and that their thought was strictly Confucian, were placed in authority all over the Empire.

Another friend, Chan Yik King, already referred to as an Inspector of Schools in Penang and as brother of our own Mr. Chan, believed the educational system was intentionally designed to secure uniformity of administration. The Empire was so vast that it was necessary that those who administered the decrees of the Son of Heaven should all be cast in the same mould. It was rather remarkable that there was a Board of Censors to scrutinize the Imperial Acts. On the whole, said Chan, the administration was pretty poor. It was only, he thought, at a period in the Tang dynasty that it was really good.

This absolute rule lasted so long because of the essential emphasis of Confucius on the responsibility of every individual for his own behaviour, and his insistence on non-interference with the affairs of others.

The picturesque Mr. Ma Man Fai in his royal blue silk gown, and with his 'classical' Chinese wispy beard, came in to see me

one day. Lest that should conjure up the picture of an aged philosopher, I should say that he gave rather the impression of some mischievous Ariel as he floated into the room with a disarming but naughty smile on his face. He was certainly not aged though there was something ageless about him. No Chinese under 80 seems to have a lined face: Mr. Ma Man Fai, considered materialistically, might have been anything from 30 to 40. He lives, not upon nectar as one might suppose, but something almost as heaven-provided—private means left by his father—and he flits from circle to circle casting doubts on everything in a very plausible way. The silken robe seems to slip through your fingers if you try to catch him as he flits from flower to flower. He thoroughly enjoys his life and one imagines he is not much troubled by scruples. Nevertheless, one enjoys contacts with him. His own enjoyment is so obvious.

He stressed the realism of the Chinese. They were concerned with life as it is. 'And there is an essential difference between the Chinese and the Christian approaches', he said. 'We say "do not do to others what you would not have them do to you". The Christian says "do as you would be done by". Superficially one is the corollary of the other, but essentially one is negative and non-aggressive, the other is positive and aggressive. I wouldn't say the Chinese approach was worse than the Western.'

Harold Lee, a barrister and a product of Pembroke, Oxford, a young man of great charm who seemed to have completely absorbed the West without rejecting the East, said that the key-notes of the Chinese way of life were that a Chinese was human, humane and natural. 'We have always been ready to kill a man for all sorts of damned silly things, we could kill a man for a couple of cash, but I don't think we have ever killed a man for believing something else. This is because we have believed in living and letting live.'

Confucius, who died in 479 B.C., seems, roughly speaking and thanks to the system of Chinese bureaucracy, to have lasted the Chinese unchallenged until Sun Yat-Sen (1866-1925).

Why was Sun Yat-Sen so different? He himself in 1923 attributed it to Hong Kong. Speaking to Hong Kong University students, he said: 'Where and how did I get my revolutionary and modern ideas? I got my ideas in this very place; in the

colony of Hong Kong. More than 30 years ago I was studying in Hong Kong and spent a great deal of spare time in walking the streets of the Colony. Hong Kong impressed me a good deal because there was orderly calm and because there was artistic work being done without interruption. I compared Heung Shan with Hong Kong, and, although they are only fifty miles apart, the difference of the governments impressed me very much.

Afterwards I saw the outside world and I began to wonder how it was that foreigners, that Englishmen could do such things as they had done, for example, with the barren rock of Hong Kong, within 70 or 80 years, while China, in 4,000 years, had no place like Hong Kong. . . . My fellow students, you and I have studied in this English colony and in an English University, and we must learn by English examples. We must carry the English example of good government to every part of China.'

Shortly before his death, and only a year after he had spoken those so encouraging words, Sun Yat-Sen, whose revolutionary oath, framed in 1905, contained the words 'the spirit and the binding principle of our various aims are Liberty, Equality and Universal Love', was urging that 'there is one thing of the greatest importance in a political party, that is, all members of the party must possess spiritual unity. In order that all members may be united spiritually, the first thing is to sacrifice freedom, the second is to offer his abilities. If the individual can sacrifice his freedom, then the whole party will have freedom. If the individual can offer his abilities, then the whole party will possess ability'.

Obviously he had not learned that in Hong Kong. In fact many influences affected the thought of this great Chinese: Confucianism, Protestant Christianity, Western democracy with its strength and its weakness, with its concern for the individual and at times and in places apparent unconcern for the masses, and Communism. It is said that when he died almost his last words were, 'I am a Christian'. How far this was a realization of ultimate truth may not be sure, but it is relevant to inquire the extent to which Christianity has taken firm root in China. It was essentially Christianity and the impact of the West which caused China to leap from Confucius to Sun Yat-Sen; but it seems as though the candle which Robert Morrison

lit in the Canton days had not only not been put out, but had caused a widespread conflagration by 1911. Something else had caught fire.

The Anglo-Chinese school which Morrison, as recorded on that tombstone in Macao, had founded in Malacca on the 11th November 1818, just a century before the Armistice Day of the First World War, was founded 'for the purpose of blending the culture of Chinese and European literature and rendering this subservient to the advancement of the cause of Christian China'. It was the first school in which a Chinese could receive a Western education and it was built at Malacca because the Chinese would not permit it on Chinese soil. An early observer said, 'The son of a Malacca peasant derives an enlightened education denied to the son of the Emperor of China'.

This was the crowning achievement of Morrison's life—by his translation of the Bible and by his dictionary he had made it possible for the Chinese to know the sources of Western civilization, and made intercourse between East and West easier. By his college he assured that Chinese would grow up who could think and reason in these terms. The nature of the Christianity which was being offered was the authentic Protestant version, in the tradition of Cromwell, with the Bible as a way of life and man himself to judge what was right and what was wrong.

In 1834, as the second act of the drama of *The Wealth of Nations, or the Rape of China*, was being played to its finish at Canton, the Prologue to another play was all unsuspected almost written. To the friends and contemporaries who watched Robert Morrison's remains lowered into the grave, the life that was ended represented a useful, admirable achievement, but it cannot have been regarded as a great 'success story'. In all his time in China he had baptized but 10 converts. Respectable, yes; impressive, no; portentous—they would not have considered such a possibility.

Before Morrison died other Protestant missionaries, American as well as British, had arrived. By 1840 there were about 25, but none had got farther than Canton and Macao. Their converts numbered less than a hundred, but it is not by numbers of converts alone that one must measure the effect of the work started by Morrison. After his death a boarding-school was founded in his memory at Macao which in due course moved to

Hong Kong. A product of this school returned to China from Yale in 1854, the first Chinese to graduate at a Western university. He set to work to persuade the Government to send youths to study in the United States. A school for official interpreters opened in Peking in 1862 and similar schools were opened in Shanghai, Canton, Tientsin and Wuchang. Technical schools, a telegraph school, the Imperial Naval College at Nanking, mining and engineering colleges, the Army Medical College at Tientsin followed. The first university was St. John's at Shanghai in 1879. Others followed and middle and higher primary schools were ordained throughout the country. In 1906 the Ministry of Education was established. In 1907 the first primary schools for girls were opened—by the end of the year there were 391 with 12,000 pupils. By 1937 there were 259,000 elementary schools with over 11 million pupils. At the same time there were 3,264 secondary schools with 627,246 students, 42 universities, 34 university colleges and 32 technical schools with 41,922 students. During the war many were closed down, but post-war found China with 53 universities, 62 university colleges and 67 technical schools having between them 80,646 students.

No pedigree is more authentic than that which traces these results back to Morrison, the pioneer of individual thinking evangelical protestant education in China. In its earlier stages the growth of this culture can almost be said to have been laboratory controlled. Of course in the latter stages many other Western influences have entered.

Sun Yat-Sen and what has followed since has been the product of this fermentation.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

Young China in Hong Kong

THE WORK of Morrison and the Protestant missionaries plainly had results very different from those intended. The introduction of how-to-think methods of education certainly broke up the what-to-think tradition, but those in China who use the Bible as a guide to their way of life are an infinitesimal proportion of those who have some Western education.

The first object of the Chinese in going to Western schools was to acquire the means of the evident material success of the West. When Chinese thought aroused itself to the idea that China could only recover her independence through the adoption of Western methods, it saw only the need of technical skill and science to combat Western ascendancy. It was not at once appreciated that Chinese culture could be affected. The Western culture was still regarded as barbarous. Chinese experience of the West had seemed thoroughly to support that conclusion, and the secular side of Western education always received the emphasis of events. The Tai Ping movement had Christian religious fervour behind it and it sprang directly from Morrison's translation of the Gospel. With Christian aid it might have flowered, but its cynical suppression by the Western powers (it is curious that it fell to Christian Gordon to perform the task) in favour of the profit accruing from support of the decadent Manchus, bound by many a treaty to the West and its interests, was certainly a win for materialism.

As a result of the spread of secular education the Chinese lost a great deal that was gracious in the old ways. We went one day to San Tin, a village of 2,000 inhabitants near the Chinese frontier, which is the home of the Man clan from Kiang Si. Its history dates back 500 years. Just outside a modern young woman was holding an open-air class on the short clipped turf, and we were led by the elders to a well-laden table set before the altar in the large ancestral temple: from the side aisles arose the voices of the boys and girls of the Government school established in the temple.

I looked at the ancestral tablets. The two central ones were those of General Man Tin Chau and his wife. The general was imprisoned by the Mongols. They wanted him to be their prime minister, but he steadfastly refused to serve them and they killed him. He used to be revered for his loyalty, but the tablets were covered thick with cobwebs and dust and the altar was all uncared for. Outside the temple was a new school garden. At the gateway were two old and damaged pillars. They bore the names of two scholars from the village successful in the Imperial civil service examinations in the Tsing dynasty. These seemed to be regarded as amusing relics of a better-forgotten age.

We went over the deserted home of a bygone notable of the old school. It had once been the biggest and best house of the village, but now it was neglected. Its beautiful carved woodwork, its coloured frescoes, and the old pottery frames of its windows were broken and faded, but it had a haunted air. I looked through the circular doorway of the library almost expecting to find the owner there asleep. In front had been a large flower garden: at the back an enclosed orchard of fruit trees. 'The old man sat here with his friends among the lichis', I was told. 'He had an educated son. He used to like seeing his son and daughter-in-law walking arm-in-arm in the orchard, but he wouldn't let them do it in the front. Funny old-fashioned chap, he was.'

The old had very much given way to the new in San Tin. They took us to see shops and talked of money-making. Two of them run a restaurant in London.

Very different, as we have seen, was the atmosphere of Worship Humble Village which produced Paul Tsui, who is about as fine an example of what Hong Kong can produce as can be found, though I doubt if he is typical. Though the village was Protestant, Paul's father had become a Catholic and Paul was baptized in that faith.

In the matter of secular education the Catholics had followed a policy fundamentally different from that of the Protestants. Their approach was primarily to train the children of Catholic families in the habit of intelligent worship and, as a means to achieving it, to train catechists and priests. It was not until the beginning of the century that Catholic missionaries turned their thoughts to the secular side of education, and even then most of them stuck to the old position that the

role of the Church was to produce second and third generation Catholics. The Protestants seem to have caused the greater upheaval in Chinese thought, but while the Catholics implanted a deeper religious sense in a larger number of converts—they had 2,000,000 in 1922 when the Protestants had 400,000 baptized—they failed to attract those who were not ready to break away from old spiritual associations.

When Hong Kong fell, on Christmas Day 1941, Paul was just 25 and a student in the Arts faculty of the University. His home background was not that of the traditional Chinese. His people were immigrants and Protestants of several generations. Yet village life in the New Territories all around him was of a truly indigenous Chinese character. He understood it well and felt a kinship with it. He had both these influences as well as his father's Catholicism in his background.

Paul started his education in his home village and then went on to the school, Wah Yan College, which his father had founded. This was followed by a short period as a teacher in a Catholic missionary school in New Guinea, after which he went to Canton University and thence to Hong Kong University, where he gained a war-time degree in 1942. During his career at school and university he developed powers of leadership. At Hong Kong University he laboured successfully to awake the somewhat torpid interest of the Chinese students in their own language and culture.

'I was 100 per cent Chinese in outlook when the war came', said Paul. 'I wanted to work for China and since I was quite small I had wanted to be President of China. In fact I had made up my mind I was going to be.'

The Japanese left him unmolested and in March 1942 he went off into Free China to seek a way to serve her. Failing to find a job with the Chinese, he went to the British and became secretary, adviser and interpreter at the advanced headquarters of the British and Allied Aid Group. It was work to which he could give an undivided loyalty—the aims of Chinese and British were the same and could only be made effective by the fullest co-operation, which Paul set out to promote. With an exceptionally honest mind Paul could never undertake a job in which he could not believe, and once in such a job must inevitably apply himself to it with all the qualities he possesses.

Circumstances not only developed Paul's good qualities in a way which made him an excellent colleague, but brought him in close touch with the British at a time when British character shows best. After the fall of Hong Kong British prestige was at a low ebb. Yet he gave them his loyalty and showed considerable physical and moral courage in doing so. It is hardly surprising that at the fall of Japan Paul was quickly given employment as an Assistant District Officer in the New Territories. Recommended for permanent employment in the Colonial Administrative Service, he became in October 1946 the first Chinese Cadet Officer in Hong Kong's Civil Service.

After a two-year course at London University, which he greatly enjoyed and which gave him a wider horizon, he went back to Hong Kong and was posted as Assistant Director of the Commerce and Industry Department. Here he made a reputation for unflinching honesty which was widely recognized and admired in Hong Kong. I was told that many Chinese scratched their heads in surprise. They thought he was a fool. Talking one day to Paul about the corruption in China, he confirmed that people thought you were foolish if you did not make what you could. On the other hand, he said, you are honoured if you are incorruptible. 'They say in Chinese', he said, 'a man lives either for money or for name.'

His job in China had brought him romance, for there he met his wife Rosie, the daughter of a Chinese general. Rosie and her sister Agnes, married to Paul's brother Mark, are delightfully pretty girls, charming and intelligent. They all live together in a flat in Kowloon, and it is rather a squash because Paul and Rosie have now four children and Mark and Agnes two.

It was a delight to sit there talking to Paul and Rosie. Careless of minor refinements, flicking his cigarette ash on the floor, Paul concentrated on things of the mind. Rosie, shy but taking it all in, said little when Paul was in the centre of the stage, but she had plenty to contribute when on her own. Paul in all his moods talks always interestingly but explosively, for he is a quick thinker and words tumble out in an excited cascade. Slight of build, he has fine expressive fingers, small wrists and a supple, tireless body. His eyes twinkle but are almost lost at times in a wrinkled, laughing face. Completely frank, he is ready to argue, sometimes almost to boast, to be modest, to bring out



New flats for Government servants built by the Public Works Department



Tai Po market in the New Territories, where country people and fisher-folk congregate



'It recalled a bygone era to see the newsboys, generally women, carrying printed posters' (p. 241)

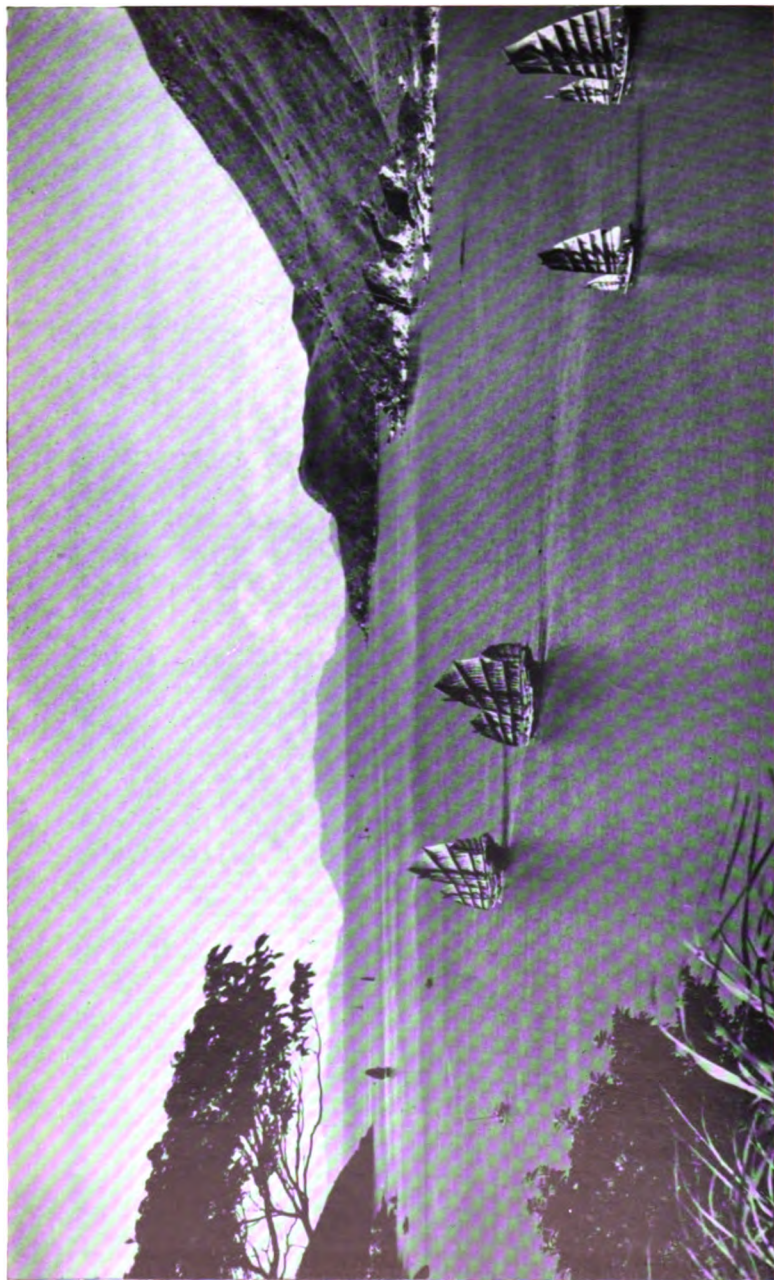


A scene from the film *Sorrows of the Forbidden City*. 'Golden Throat, the leading lady, had a lovely voice' (p. 122)



'Sir Shouson Chow in the beautiful garden, so much of which he has planted with his own hands' (p. 194)

PLATE XXXIX



Fishing junks heading out to sea through Aberdeen Channel. 'With their brown sails, ribbed like bats' wings, they make the fingers of every would-be artist itch' (p. 39)

sound ideas, to be naïve and youthful, cynical or contradictory.

We went with him one day to Ma Wan Island, which lives on making shrimp paste, and there we visited the council chamber. At the end of the room there were two pictures, Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-Sen, with their flags beside them. I asked Paul if pictures of the King and the Union Jack were never displayed in such places.

'You can't get across the conception of the King to the Chinese,' he said; 'your conception is quite different to that of the Chinese in Hong Kong. To them the King is an overlord and implies Imperialism.'

'But surely', I said, 'Chiang Kai-shek and Sun Yat-Sen are there as rulers of China? My point is that this is not Chinese territory and one would expect to see the King's portrait.'

'Whatever else Chiang Kai-shek is, or Mao Tse-tung (and we shall see his portrait in other places which are more up to date), neither of them are kings and Sun Yat-Sen is different. He is revered as a philosopher rather than a ruler. His portrait has the same sort of significance as a picture of Confucius.'

In 1927, Sun Yat-Sen's *Three Principles of Democracy* was turned into a religious text-book in Chinese schools. Every Monday morning in all schools and Government offices a religious service was held at which all present made three bows to his portrait, commemorated him in three minutes' silence in which they made their vows of service and recited his last appeal to his people.

I talked about the King with a Chinese friend later, arguing that he stood not as a symbol of overlordship and oppression, but as the head and guarantor of freedom and a free society of peoples. He invited me to ask another Chinese friend of Britain near by what he thought. 'He is a foreigner', he said at once. 'If we respect him too much, others say "You are a foreigner".'

'The conception of a king does not exist in Hong Kong among the Chinese', repeated my friend.

'Whose fault is that?' I asked.

'It's multiple. In schools we learn of the overthrow of the Manchus by Sun Yat-Sen and kings thus become synonymous with bad things. The Chinese are proud. We know we are intellectually superior even if physically inferior. An overlord must

serve them; for instance they throw out gods who do not give them what they ask. But now', he went on, 'more and more people want to become British citizens in Hong Kong. Now is the time to inject new ideas.'

This discussion helps to explain the difficulties confronting the Chinese in Hong Kong. Paul Tsui tried to bring it home to me by referring to his own tussle between dual environments.

I asked him one day what had become of his ambition to be President of China. He grinned. 'Maybe I'll have to be content with being the first Chinese governor of Hong Kong.'

'Why not have a shot at being both?' I asked.

'They throw out gods who do not give them what they ask.' It is important to remember this. In Chinese thought gods and ideological systems are there to serve mankind, not to be served. When the old gods are seen to serve no longer they are burnt or cast aside and others tried. The Chinese have, one surmises, during the ferment of the last 50 years regarded not only the old gods but Christianity and Sun Yat-Sen in this way, and found them largely lacking. In Hong Kong, it is evident, Adam Smith has scored a success with Chinese realism. How far is it our fault that no wider success can be claimed with Christianity and the Western way of life? The Chinese are now testing Communism with the same old realistic outlook. If they find it wanting, shall we be ready to show that what appears to them as unserviceability in the things which we know are best is due to human failings—ours and theirs? It is only by faithful service on the human side, not by expectation to be served, that grace and salvation come. 'Now is the time to inject new ideas.'

One of the assistant social welfare officers, C. N. Li, another young Catholic, though not a practising one, whose grandfather was the first Chinese minister in Brussels, talked of the Endeavourers. This was a group of about 50 Chinese employees of Government, founded after the liberation, whose members dedicated themselves to public service. Their time was given without stint and, although all but five of them were on a low scale of pay, they ran their own welfare fund, from which, in addition to a monthly expenditure of over £30 on help to the needy, they built up a reserve of over £300. They were, said Military Government, 'a shining example'. Li held that

there is now ‘a spiritual and mental vacuum’ amongst Chinese. They are discarding old forms of worship and have nothing with which to replace them. He thought it changes people’s life spiritually to alter their material conditions. If their economic condition is secured and they are given a mental stimulus the way is open to improve their spiritual outlook.

Typical or not, the important thing is that there are young people thinking of the need for a fresh start.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

The Inevitability of Hong Kong

IT IS A CURIOUS story, this tale of Hong Kong with all its conflicts, with all its concentration on material things. What it is, is so much a consequence of how it happened and how it grew that it is difficult to escape from the discreditable or at least dubiously moral facts of its history. Yet it is undeniable that Hong Kong has been productive of good things.

The good has not been an accidental by-product of British establishment of law and order. Britain does not believe in justice and fair-play simply because they are good for business. There are far too many British individuals with that annoying consciousness of superiority which exasperates other peoples, but the desire to give others the benefits and freedoms which the British race has so long enjoyed is a deep-seated national characteristic. It has to be borne in mind that all that is implied in ‘freedom’ today had not been discovered in the nineteenth century, or even a decade ago, but the conflict in the world today increasingly emphasizes the value and the validity of the essential concept of freedom for the individual as it has been developed in this land. There is no question that this concept is not being developed in Hong Kong, though I would say, and many I think would agree with me, too slowly. I am not forgetting the difficulties. The evils, except the results of selfishness, belong mainly to the past; opium no one would defend

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 nowadays, and few would dispute that our original seizure of Hong Kong could not be justified in the terms of today's thought. It is natural enough that China should feel that Hong Kong was taken from her by an unjust use of force, and it is no answer to this to say that, however bad the reasons and methods of our taking Hong Kong, we have made a barren island into what it is. The fact is that it has paid us very well and is still paying big dividends. It is true that the Chinese could not have built anything like Hong Kong without British initiative, but it is also true that we could not have achieved it alone. Chinese co-operation, industriousness, and instinct for trade have been indispensable.

What is, however, perfectly true is that although we did wrest a barren rock from China, the society in Hong Kong now is a spontaneous growth of European and Chinese immigrants. No indigenous people beyond a few pirates have had their interests interfered with. No Red Indians or native tribes have been sacrificed or subjugated. No slaves or indentured labourers were brought there. All that has happened has been that we took a barren island, established law and order, and said that it was open to all to come and settle and trade. Hong Kong, as we have seen so clearly, has never pretended to be anything more than a trading port offering entrepôt services on a commercial basis. It has never interfered with Chinese politics and it has always been ready to give assistance on business terms when required. Its honesty in this respect has given it a standing with China. It was well understood in a country where trade is second nature.

The facts are, then, that the China of today suffers nothing, except the remembrance of an old wrong, from the present status of Hong Kong. On the contrary, countless Chinese and China herself have found it extremely useful. Far more wrong would be done by any attempt to put the clock back.

But whatever the balance of good and evil, one can hardly escape the conclusion that Hong Kong was at least inevitable. I quoted earlier the words of Thomas Violet. Ruschenberger the American naval surgeon said much the same thing. So important was their trade to the foreigners that the Chinese were 'always more successful in their contests by an appeal to the pocket than to arms, thus proving the assertion of a great

English writer that "Nothing dejects a trader like the interruption of his profits". A commercial people, however magnanimous, shrinks at the thought of declining trade, and an unfavourable balance'. If it is so difficult to 'interpose between the merchant and his profit', it cannot be disputed that Hong Kong had to happen.

It was inevitable because of the riches of China and the character of the British and the Chinese. A combination of any other Western race and the Chinese would not have produced the same result. The American answer, for example, was quite different. Much was due to the character of the Chinese, and in this respect it is important to contrast the Chinese of the north and south. Lin Yu Tang speaks of the cultural unity, common historical tradition and written language which bind the Chinese people together, but none the less there is a variety of races, different in stature, temperament and mental make-up. 'On the one hand we have the northern Chinese, acclimatized to simple thinking and hard living, tall and stalwart, hale, hearty and humorous, onion-eating and fun-loving, children of nature, who are in every way more Mongolic and more conservative than the conglomeration of peoples near Shanghai and who suggest nothing of their loss of racial vigour. They are the Honan Boxers, the Shantung bandits and the imperial brigands who have furnished China with all the native imperial dynasties, the raw material from which the characters of Chinese novels of war and adventure are drawn.

'South in Kwangtung, one meets again a different people, where racial vigour is again in evidence, where people eat like men, and work like men, enterprising, carefree, spendthrift, pugnacious, adventurous, progressive and quick-tempered, where beneath the Chinese culture a snake-eating aborigines tradition persists, revealing a strong admixture of the blood of the ancient *Yueh* inhabitants of southern China.'

It was northerners who were ruling Kwangtung. They belonged to and took their orders from an alien dynasty in Peking. The Chinese system of government, highly centralized and absolute, evolved over centuries, was able to endure for so long because on the one hand Confucianism glorified not only filial obedience but the principle of minding your own business, and on the other because the system of education taught all the

servants of the State to think alike. Peking had the wisdom to see that there was danger to Chinese civilization in too much of the aggressive impact of the West and that opium was a bad thing for the Chinese. Canton was not unreceptive to the first proposition, but found the latter incompatible with their principles of making money. Furthermore they discovered in due course that the foreign devils, of whom they had greater experience than Peking, had their merits. They grew to dislike them less as foreigners because they liked them more as men.

One speaks of the English pioneer setting forth with the Bible in one hand and a sword in the other. To this armament one should add the ledger. Some used one weapon, some the other, some had an eye to all three. Probably if the Ten Commandments had contained the specific prohibitions Thou shalt not own slaves and Thou shalt not sell opium, Englishmen, at least after Puritan times, would have done neither. As it was, in their attitude to profit motives there was little to choose between the English (or Scots) and the Cantonese merchants. The difference was that while the latter were passive in their reaction to authority, the whole philosophy of the former was active and aggressive. Within limits they could submit to 'squeeze'; under other names the institution was known in the West. But the hampering restrictions on trade were not to be tolerated. If too much impediment was placed in the British trader's way the sword must be called upon to support the ledger.

But ledgers do not fill themselves up comfortably if the sword is too much in action. The atmosphere of the counting-house must be quiet and under its master's control. Canton offered no prospect of this. Macao was someone else's house. The merchants, smarting with the loss of 20,000 chests of opium, said 'Let Hong Kong be' and there was Hong Kong. Matheson wrote to Jardine and described its advantages and said he was pleased and confident of the future. No other result was possible.

That it should flourish was, again taking into account British and Chinese susceptibility to trade, also inevitable. In Hong Kong the principle of free trade was given the widest expression. It was a place where a man could build godowns and store his goods under his own control. There could be no more bother about opium there. But even so trade sometimes suffered inconveniences from scruples. 'The *Gazelle*', wrote Matheson,

'was unnecessarily detained at Hong Kong in consequence of Captain Crocker's repugnance to receiving opium on the Sabbath. We have every respect for persons entertaining strict religious principles, but we fear that very godly people are not suited for the drug trade. Perhaps it would be better that the Captain should resign.'

Efforts to restrict smuggling continued to be regarded as an unjustifiable interference with trade. Quite a storm blew up when the Chinese Government's Imperial Maritime Customs Service was set up and went into active operation. 'The British merchants of Hong Kong were angry', says Sayer, and in 1861 set up the Chamber of Commerce to watch their interests. From that day to this the Chamber has fought the battle of free trade, free enterprise, free movement, and as far as possible freedom from taxation.

The idea was always that in Hong Kong you should buy and sell with whom you liked, where you liked, when you liked and what you liked. Nature had helped by endowing it with a natural harbour which was the only deep-sea harbour between Singapore and Shanghai. It was the entrance to China for trade from Europe, the Middle East, India and Malaysia. As the world has developed so has the position of Hong Kong improved. It holds not only a strategic position on the steamship routes of the world but now on the main air routes as well.

The handmaidens of trade, banking, insurance, storage and transshipment facilities, are all pampered and efficient servants. Hong Kong is the largest banking centre of the Far East, is probably unrivalled in the western Pacific for its insurance facilities, its harbour is one of the cheapest in the world, and its storage facilities and handling charges are better and cheaper than any in Asia. Nowhere in China are ships unloaded and turned round in so short a time.

The entrepôt function of Hong Kong has remained paramount throughout its history, and, as the Director of Commerce and Industry has lately written: /It is very obvious that if it is to be fulfilled with any efficiency it must follow that restrictions on the movement of goods in and out of the Colony must be kept down to the absolute minimum. Hence the tradition of free trade in Hong Kong. Even at the present day there is no general tariff, duties for revenue purposes being levied only on

alcoholic liquors, aerated waters, tobacco, hydrocarbon oils, and toilet preparations and proprietary medicines.'

Hong Kong by its very nature finds charges on trade or restrictions of any kind as irritating as a hair shirt. 'It is unfortunate,' continues the Director mildly, 'from Hong Kong's point of view, that with the outbreak of war it became necessary to impose a number of restrictions on the free movement of goods in and out of the Colony, but such restrictions always have been kept to the minimum consistent with the Colony's obligations as a member of the sterling area, a member of the International Monetary Fund, and in accordance with international commodity controls. Despite such restrictions, the original purpose of the Colony has always been kept in view, and its function in trading is still primarily and fundamentally that of an entrepôt.'

On liberation one of the first things Military Government did was to repatriate internees. The slogan was GO, Get Fit and Come Back! This, however, did not take account of Hong Kong's traditional spirit. The Chamber of Commerce did not agree with this 'academic policy of the military administration'. 'The impact of actualities', says the Chamber's report, 'was brought home to the Authorities at home before very long, thanks to strenuous representations by the China Association and other bodies.'

'Many of us', said Mr. Cassidy, Chairman of the Chamber, in March 1950, 'have found price control a thorn in the flesh and we should like to see the last of it.'

This is the authentic voice of Hong Kong, *laissez-faire*. To it came the humanitarian answer. 'I think I can truthfully retort', said the Financial Secretary in the Legislative Council, 'that the suffering public find the prices charged by the merchants a pain in the neck, or rather in the pocket, and that they would like to see more price control. The Price Controller has accordingly been instructed to make fuller use of his powers with a view to stopping this tendency to exploit the consumer.'

Chinese members quote Adam Smith in the Legislative Council. In 1946 there was much talk of income tax, and, opposing it the following year, Dr. S. N. Chau said: 'Adam Smith, the great economist, said that the ideal tax should be collectable at a convenient time without extravagant expense,

armies of collectors, or sheaves of tax banks, which should keep the citizens distracted from their pursuits of earning a living. The tax should be levied with a minimum of interference with free enterprise and the normal ebb and flow of economic tides.'

The spectre of income tax receded, exorcized by the invocation of the patron saint, with the coming of the boom. Disguised as salaries tax, corporation tax, and business profits tax, it has, however, managed to insinuate a cautious foot.

Similarly Hong Kong has always reacted unfavourably to proposals to restrict immigration. The coming and going is good for trade, however crowded the tenements and squatter colonies may be, and free enterprise means that it is not a profitable undertaking to pull down these wretched slums and rebuild decent workmen's dwellings on any large scale. Some of the owners consider that they are doing a charitable deed in maintaining them, for the rents are restricted and rent restrictions do not apply to new building. So we have in the cities of Hong Kong and Kowloon street after street of these old tenements, letting in little light and air and containing anything from five to ten times as many people as they should, and whole towns made of packing-case wood. On the other hand there are these sumptuous new blocks of offices with marble walls and express lifts, blocks of luxury flats, many new cinemas, shops, restaurants, amusement parks, cabarets, and so on.

Here indeed is the 'enlightened self-interest' of Bentham—Hong Kong's edition of the 'dark satanic mills' of England in the 1830's. Odd it is that the reaction from those mills in England a hundred years ago had led to Hong Kong's modern factories being up to date, while so many of the workmen's houses, and indeed the smaller factories, are so terrible. It is 'unfortunate but unavoidable', says Hong Kong, for it would not pay to build decent buildings. And admittedly they would be no less crowded without restriction of population. To this same attitude is due the fact that there is no city hall, no public library, no concert hall, in fact no provision for culture, for these things do not pay dividends like tramways, ferries and buses.

It is commonly said in Hong Kong that the overcrowded conditions of the poor are the fault of the Chinese, for nobody tells them to come. But the authentic voice of Hong Kong has

been 'Let them come, it's good for trade'. Not only does Hong Kong not like the closing of the door to immigration and emigration, for its mind works like the management of a department store, but also it is inclined to believe that as long as there are goods to be bought and sold the door must be kept open, that Hong Kong could not exist without it. Recent efforts at control have been forced on Government but are not popular in any quarter.* In these circumstances the consequences of 'enlightened self-interest' can only be deplorable.

Early in 1950 I was told that a large proportion of the working classes had insufficient means. Really this means that they could make just sufficient to live. The moment comes when the cost of living in Hong Kong becomes so great that even the conditions outside are preferable. For this to happen conditions must be very bad indeed, for final economic pressure only exerts itself at a point when the standard of living is much worse than humanitarian conditions demand. The Chinese, it is true, are industrious by nature and the conditions of China have given them little chance for leisure in the struggle for survival, but there can be little doubt that they have to be too industrious. When education cannot provide for all the children of Hong Kong, it is perhaps unreasonable to complain of the industry of children sitting in streets making match-boxes or artificial flowers, or of women picking cotton-waste in any odd moment that can be filched from domestic duties. But these activities are not signs of a healthy community, which demands that children should be occupied with education rather than with manual toil. In fact, all the way through Hong Kong's economy the principle of enlightened self-interest demands that factory owners, property owners, and business men should without interference be allowed to carry on their business as it seems best to them, and that numberless Chinese should be allowed to come in and make what bargains they can in their own interests and the general interests of the trading store.

We have seen the reasons for which the poor Chinese come in, and of course the disturbance caused by the Communist defeat of the Kuomintang brought many more, rich as well as

* It is interesting to note that freedom of entry has been regarded by China as an intrinsic right and the very moderate measure, control of immigration, referred to was greeted with outcries from both Peking and Formosa.

poor, but it needs to be emphasized that there are no grounds for accepting the plea that they are attracted to Hong Kong by good living conditions. Conditions in China, it is true, have been far worse than they are in Hong Kong, but both are bad. The Chinese do not like the conditions under which they live in Hong Kong, but they would rather put up with them than stay out, as long as those conditions offer even a marginally better chance of mere survival.

It is sometimes argued that Hong Kong must limit the standard of its social services, first because it cannot pay for them, and secondly because, if they were too good, more population would be attracted from China. Some people reinforce this argument by saying that China would object if Hong Kong's services were too markedly in advance of those available in China. The first of these arguments is valid enough if it is true, but those who argue thus go on to say that Hong Kong cannot tax itself more heavily as this would hit at trade. As regards the second, it is true enough that if the possibility of survival is greater in Hong Kong than in South China it attracts more people, though it is very questionable how far the indirect benefits of good social services attract Chinese. It is rather the cash advantages which attract them.

There seems to me an element of immorality in these arguments. Other people have to be satisfied with less profits and a greater burden of taxation in favour of the under-privileged. Hong Kong has surely an obligation to provide social services on a scale necessary to cope with as many people as it admits. It cannot fairly decline responsibility for those it lets in on the ground that they are foreigners. Though their welfare is expensive, the Colony cannot properly divest itself of full responsibility for them, for its deliberate policy has drawn them there, and its liability does not end in providing a minimum. It must provide what it can really afford. If it can afford to build luxury offices and flats it can afford to house the poor better.

It is of course not by any means to be assumed that Government is indifferent to this. The type of government in Hong Kong is benevolent paternalism, and it draws its benevolence not only from its expatriate officials but from the charitable feelings of its merchants. William Jardine early established a tradition of generosity in his firm, and others have shared in

building up this tradition. One has only, for instance, to look at the personal records of unofficial members of the Legislature to see that, apart from their great business interests, they almost all devote time to voluntary public service. They press for improved services in the Legislative Council. Furthermore, a colonial government of this pattern is subject always to pressure in a humanitarian direction by Parliament and the Colonial Office. There is no doubt that the resources of the Government of Hong Kong could make the Colony a very comfortable place for about a million people. What they were succeeding in doing for two and a half times that number in May 1950 was indeed remarkable, and bears favourable comparison with the achievements of governments which have policies more in accordance with the thought of today but less than Hong Kong's material resources. Government realizes the great dangers to public order and health which are inherent in the situation and which could give rise to serious political ills. It is spurred not only by that but by a great humanitarian impulse on the part of a staff of enthusiasts and a number of voluntary workers whose efforts are all too little publicized.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

The Purpose of Hong Kong

COLONIES—if by that term one means, as one should these days, countries not yet evolved to full nationhood and still requiring guidance, development and protection under the care of nations equipped for the task with the necessary spiritual and material resources—can be of two kinds. They can either be 'empty' countries settled by immigrants who intend to make their homes there and live primarily on the natural resources of their new homeland, or they can be countries inhabited by indigenous peoples who have not yet acquired the knowledge and skill necessary to develop themselves and the natural resources of their lands. We are used to regarding a colony as a community

with a developing personality and a sense of stability and cohesion however plural its society may be. We speak of the soul of a nation and we know what it means without its being defined. Though I do not think I have heard the expression used, I think I could maintain that the colonies I have known have souls. Not all of them have been colonies of indigenous people: Mauritius and Gibraltar are as 'artificial' as Hong Kong, but I would say that both of them very definitely have souls. The fact is, I suppose, that every human society which has a community feeling has a soul: its members may spontaneously develop the community feeling or they may be led or helped to do so, and this guidance is particularly necessary in societies which are made up of individuals with different backgrounds.

When we talk of colonies becoming self-governing I rather think we take it for granted that they are communities with souls of their own. I doubt if a colony is a colony if it has not this character.

I doubt if it can be one without an 'intention'. It has been said that if any group of people in the world decide to be a nation, nothing can prevent them. It is no doubt also true that if a group have not that intention nothing can make them into a nation, or a colony.

Hong Kong seems to have forsworn at its birth any intention of being a colony. It was not Britain's intention to form one and the earliest Colonial Office dispatch, dated 3rd June 1843, said that the new colony was not a colony. 'It is occupied not with a view to colonization but for diplomatic, commercial and military purposes', and it is clear that neither the British merchants whose presence led to its capture, nor the Chinese who found it profitable to do business or work there, ever intended to become colonists of a new country. Hong Kong Island could in theory at any rate have been a colony of the first category—'empty': the New Territories could have been one of the second if it had been ceded, not leased.

Hong Kong, indeed, seems to have started off without any intention of being permanent at all, though in the course of time a few of its citizens have, as we have seen, become genuine colonists. At its birth there was an idea that it might only endure as long as circumstances made it necessary. Time has

at any rate shown how necessary it is, not least to China herself.

✧ That Hong Kong's primary role is that of a great trading port we need not, indeed, be in any doubt. It has the atmosphere of a gigantic edition of Selfridges and Harrods and all the other great department stores of London rolled into one and combined with that of Victoria Station, and it is always the week before Christmas in the store and always rush hour in the station. There is coming and going and buying and selling all the time. Hong Kong performs the urgent task of being Britain's shop window in the Far East. And, since it is the traditional role of the Navy in peace-time to protect the trade of Britain, Hong Kong is a fortress too. Since navies need secure bases, Hong Kong has its garrison of soldiers and airmen. As long as its trading role endures Hong Kong will have that garrison, but it is easy to perceive that if it failed in its primary role there would be little object in its fortress role. I know well a ruined and abandoned fortress city on the southern shores of Arabia which had many of the characteristics of Gibraltar and Hong Kong—and indeed Aden, from which it is only about 150 miles distant. Built on and around a rock standing out on a promontory, with no water sources but tanks to catch the rain, with well-built forts to reinforce its natural strength, it was called Canneh or Cana and was the great incense port to which the precious cargo was brought to be carried overland to the Mediterranean and the Western world. The prophet Ezekiel, apostrophizing Tyre and Sidon, says of it (and of Aden):

These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue cloths and brodered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise.

It was indeed a veritable Hong Kong.

When the Roman navigator Hippalus discovered the changes of the monsoon about A.D. 45, and the incense trade went by sea, Cana was doomed. Now it is called Husn Ghorab, the Castle of the Raven. It has no other inhabitant.

It was of course inevitable, but it is to me a sad story. An administrator must always have nearest his heart and his mind the interests of those among whom and for whom he works, the people of whatever island, promontory or country in which his job lies. The tragedy of Gibraltar or Aden or Hong Kong passing

to alien rule because their strategic importance had passed would lie in seeing the worlds of fellow British subjects crumble before their eyes. There are no more loyal British subjects than the Gibraltarians—all of them—despite their differences of language and culture. There are no people who have more appreciated Britain than some of the Arabs of Aden. There are no people who are more ready to fight with us than the small Portuguese and Eurasian communities of Hong Kong. And there are no people who love their homelands under British rule more than these people love the rocks on which they dwell.

But Britain has made it quite clear that she has no intention of giving up Hong Kong. She has given it the largest garrison it has ever had in its history: a garrison large enough to deter any aggressor from the idea of an easy attack. The British Government have categorically declared their intention of maintaining their position in Hong Kong. 'We feel in this troubled situation the value and the importance of Hong Kong as a centre of stability will be greater than ever', said Mr. Mayhew in the House of Commons.

After the reoccupation and up to mid-1949 Hong Kong had a garrison of about 6,000 men. Then the Communist sweep over China looked as if it might be a threat to the Colony and between June and September the garrison was increased to about 30,000 men of all services. Early in 1950, owing to the stubbornness of the Malayan problem, some troops were withdrawn. Later others went to Korea.

The advent of these large reinforcements meant a considerable increase in public morale. The Chinese Press in Hong Kong has, with the exception of the very Left organs, reflected the great friendliness of the people to its garrison. It always shows a great interest in the forces and their activities, and the demand for news items about them expresses the general interest. Much has been done by the Colony for the entertainment of the troops, who find it difficult to afford the high prices of everything in Hong Kong. The Colony contributed a quarter of a million dollars to welfare, has provided clubs, and organized picnics and Chinese dinners for them. This is appreciated by the troops and is Hong Kong's way of showing that their presence is appreciated. On the other side the troops arrange massed band performances for the populace, a gesture which is also appreciated.

Our troops in Hong Kong have been told that there are two main reasons for their coming to defend Hong Kong in the present disturbed times. The first is that we have obligations which cannot honourably be overlooked or renounced', obligations to those born there and who know no other home, obligations to traders and to refugees. The second is because it is very much to our economic interest to defend it. 'Full employment and the maintenance of the present standard of living at home depend ultimately on one thing only—our power to export.'

Trade is still, as it has always been, our main reason for being in Hong Kong. The expansion of British trade has had much to do with the expansion of Empire, and we have seen how Hong Kong has been an epitome of this story since those days of Canton when the British merchants, led by Jardine, provided the stimulus on which it was founded. The story of Jardine's, indeed, runs as a theme through the story of Hong Kong. A manuscript history of the early years of the firm, which I had the opportunity of seeing in Hong Kong, ends with the words: 'Five clippers brought them drug (opium) from India and six running vessels maintained communication up the coast. They were the biggest and most powerful British firm in the Far East, as they still are today. They were then and they are now a Scotch house which keeps the Sabbath and everything else on which it can lay its hands.'

There might well have been no British colony of Hong Kong if it had not been for William Jardine, and to the firm he founded many of Hong Kong's greatest enterprises are due. Most of the Hong Kong firms which had their origins in the Canton days have now disappeared, but Jardine's has gone on from strength to strength. The opium trade, on which its early prosperity had been largely founded, gradually, of course, declined, but the firm was always in the forefront of new developments whether in trade or allied interests, or in the public affairs of the Colony. The story, too, of Hong Kong's development as the capital of the British system of trade in the Far East is to a large extent the story of Jardine's. Soon after the firm's first substantial house in Hong Kong was built and made the head office, it opened up in Shanghai, Foochow and Tientsin, and later had branches in many other places in China and in other countries of the Far East.

The other great motive force in empire-building—that of spreading the Gospel—was not so evident at Hong Kong's birth. Here in China the two streams of trade and humanitarianism, the one represented by Jardine and the spirit of Adam Smith, the other by Morrison and that of Wilberforce, drifted apart. Humanitarianism has, as we have seen, not been lacking and of late years has been much more evident in the Colony's policies, but there has not been any positive alliance between Christianity and commerce—the emphasis has been almost entirely on the latter element. Professor Hancock has recently written:

We can symbolize British colonial policy in this period (the nineteenth century) as an alliance between Wilberforce and Adam Smith. These two men, in their separate ways, affirmed both the value of the individual and the unity of humanity. Wilberforce, the religious preacher, derived these principles from the universal fatherhood of God: Smith, the philosopher and economist of natural law, derived them from 'the natural propensity of mankind'. One man took it for granted that any individual of any race would find a fuller life within the expanding Christian Church; the other took it for granted that he would live more abundantly within the expanding economy of Europe. Both men discovered in society, not in the State, the principle of healthy growth. Christianity and commerce were the true creators of liberty and welfare: the State was, at best, the hinderer of hindrances. In the administration of dependencies its function was to maintain a respectable code of conduct to which individuals of all races must conform: in particular, it must defend indigenous people against the aggressions of ruthless Europeans.

Commerce led to the British embarking on an adventure in China which has had far-reaching results. Jardine and the British merchants saw nothing wrong in inducing Britain to force China to trade in Britain's way, but when the British undertook the job they acted as the British do and made a compromise. They took a bit of China—the empty, barren island of Hong Kong rearing its rocky peak just off the China coast and sheltering only a few pirates—in which they carried on trade in the British way, and they also made the Chinese open five ports to Western trade. In the rest of China they left the Chinese to run things in their own way.

That was the simple intention, but as we see things 111 years later it has not worked out quite so simply. We should not forget that the payment of 21 million dollars in damages and indemnities at a fixed interest rate of 5 per cent had economic consequences which were certainly not intended. To pay them,

a Customs service under foreign control was set up and an import duty of 5 per cent on foreign goods levied. The result was that the Chinese embarking on development on Western lines were impeded by the low duty from assisting the growth of local industries by protective duties. Furthermore the payment of indemnities and interest from this Customs duty meant that it was hard for the Chinese to finance national development, and forced them to levy heavy taxes and take foreign loans. All this contributed to increase xenophobia.

Above all, however, nothing has been more far-reaching than the consequences of Morrison's work. While the creation of Hong Kong in a century is surprising as a material phenomenon, it pales almost to insignificance when compared with the change that has come over China in far less than that period—in fact, well within the lifetime of many of us. The contrast between the China which ceded Hong Kong and the China of today is bewildering in its intensity. But something has been left out.

We have within ourselves a deep conviction that we have a way of life worth preserving, worth fighting for, and, because of its value, worth giving to others. Whatever our faults of omission or commission in the past, or in the present, however much we may yet lack the wisdom to order our affairs aright, we know that Western civilization, with all that implies, contains essentially the means to a good life. Indeed, we see it being eagerly sought after by others.

If, however, the Western way of life is to endure we shall have to decide what we mean by it. Do we mean the capitalist way best typified by the still existing system in America, or do we mean the Welfare State system best typified by present conditions in our own country? Because Hong Kong is at present frankly an anomaly in the British scheme of things.

In a Far East overshadowed by the curtain between two ways of thought and life, Hong Kong is the only British outpost: it is the only place in the Far East in which the great freedoms can still be understood and practised, the only bridgehead over which they could be carried into China. Within it Hong Kong University is the only crucible into which an admixture of British thought can be poured to be fused with what is best in Chinese thought. It may be only through Hong Kong and such

other British communities as may survive in the Far East that the British way of life, and the Christian concepts of the importance of individual personality and of duty towards our neighbours on which it is based, can be presented. |

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

On the Frontier Again

ACROSS THE Shum Chun river at Man Kam To two posts of armed Chinese police in khaki uniforms faced each other. On each side there were barbed-wire road-blocks. Over the muddied swirling waters a bridge painted in the lucky vermilion of Confucian China—or was it the symbolic red of the Communist world?—joined British Territory, or B.T. as it is called, to Chinese Territory, or C.T. A notice-board on the Chinese side read 'Chinese Maritime Customs'.

It was pouring with rain and I leant on the bridge to watch the dismal scene. The paint came off on the sleeve of my mackintosh. It had no ideological significance. It was just ordinary British red-lead undercoating from a Colonial Public Works department store.

A thin stream of pedestrians padded through the blocks going to C.T., and others came from C.T. to B.T. Some coolies carried across to China huge grindstones marked 'Made in U.K.'. Some rather miserable-looking creatures came to B.T. It seemed a very ordinary proceeding. They took no notice of the police and the police took no notice of them. The corporal was oiling and cleaning his revolver in the little shelter on the British side.

A rather diffident man shuffled across to B.T. The corporal summoned him and asked him a question to which he replied. The corporal said something to him and went on polishing his revolver. With no further word the man turned round and shuffled back over the bridge to C.T. If I could have spoken Chinese I might have told him that if he walked a mile or two upstream he could easily step across the stream. I had done it

myself in the course of the morning. No doubt he knew it better than I did, but why had he given himself the trouble? I asked the corporal if he ever had any talk with the Chinese post.

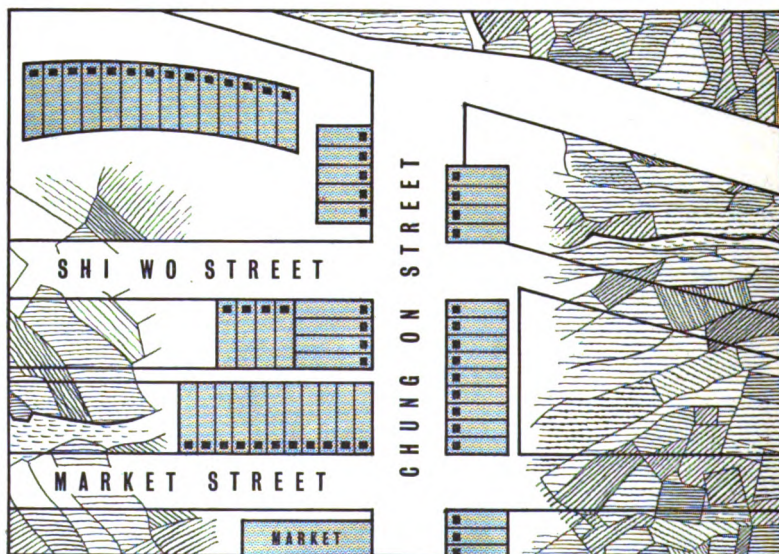
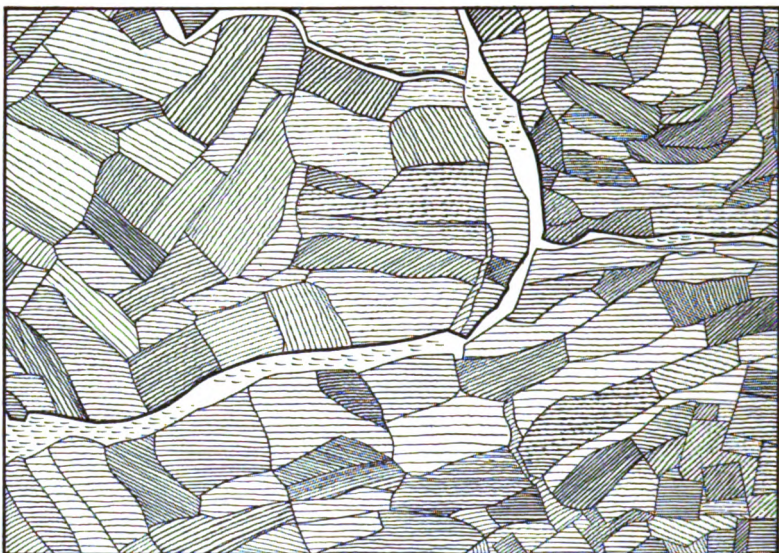
'No,' he said, 'we are changed every week, but we know some of them who have been in the Hong Kong Police.'

'Do you turn many people back?' I asked.

'Some, if they haven't got definite business here, or haven't got an identity card, or aren't just local people going to market. We always let the old and destitutes through as they can live better in B.T.; but we don't stop any going to C.T.'

What the corporal thought about it all, I don't know, and as he kept a completely expressionless countenance I could not guess. It is not a policeman's job to think about the things I wanted to know, so I didn't ask him. All the same, if they thought anything at all beyond the fact that they were being paid for doing their job, I *should* like to know what those two posts of Chinese police, the one the servants of free-for-all Hong Kong and the other those of Communist China who seem to change from one to the other quite easily, thought about it. I thought quite a lot myself and not least that overcrowded Hong Kong still let in the destitute to give him a chance of survival. I wondered if there was a bridge joining the banks of the Shum Chun at Man Kam To a hundred years ago, but even a red P.W.D. Bailey bridge does not necessarily link two opposite ways of thought.

All this started back in Canton; I wonder what Jardine and Morrison would have thought of it?



TSUN WAN: A NOTE ON DEVELOPMENT

'Tsun Wan . . . until recently was a quiet rural village with paddy-fields all round. It has been chosen for planned urban development and already it has the busy, crowded air of a pioneer town. There are several new factories now in its vicinity' (p. 56).

*The above plans show the same area of
Tsun Wan before and after development.*

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Her Majesty's Stationery Office publishes an illustrated Annual Report on Hong Kong, and amongst important non-official periodic publications should be mentioned the Annual Report of the Chamber of Commerce and the reports of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

I take this opportunity also of drawing attention to a forthcoming publication by Chatham House, *Public Administration in Hong Kong*, and expressing my grateful thanks to its author, Sir Charles Collins, for kindly making part of his manuscript available to me.

W.H.I.

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